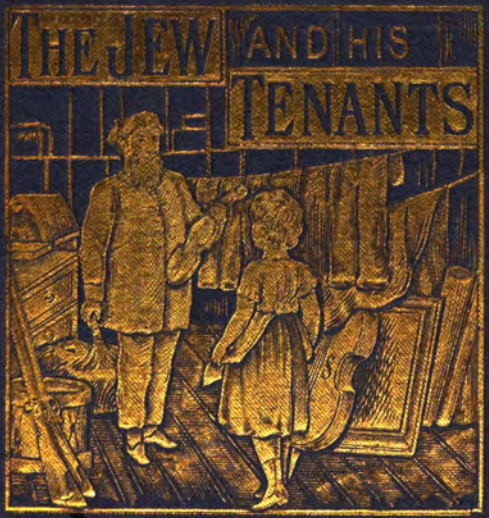
THE JEW AND HIS TENANTS



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MR. MORDECAI GREETED BY ALICE.—*See page 24.*

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THE

JEW AND HIS TENANTS.

BY

A. D. WALKER.

'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.'—
GALATIANS vi. 10.

London:
WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE,
2, CASTLE-STREET, CITY-ROAD;
AND 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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HAYMAN BROTHERS AND LILLY,
PRINTERS,
HATTON HOUSE, FARRINGDON ROAD,
LONDON, E.C.

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PREFACE.

In this little volume we have given in the pawnbroker a stern, unlovely character. This is not done to speak disparagingly of the Jews, but to portray a character which is too often found both among Jews and Gentiles. We would not depreciate our Jewish brethren, 'for unto them were committed the oracles of God.' From them came the great Messiah, whom they refuse to recognise. The author sincerely desires that this narrative may be the means of leading some of Mordecai's faith to the true Messiah.

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THE

JEW AND HIS TENANTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PAWNBROKER AND HIS SHOP.

MORDECAI STRECK, the Jew, kept a pawnbroker's shop in a street of one of our great cities. And a prosperous business he made of it. The three balls showed the people where to come to borrow money, and the Jew sometimes boastingly said he never saw an idle day; trade was always brisk with him. The poor often received money from him, not because he was charitable, but because he would give a small amount on an article of dress, or a treasured relic.

Mordecai made money when dealing with the poor, for what they brought to the shop was seldom redeemed within the time allowed by law, and when that time had expired, the articles were sold to fill his coffers.

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Those that pawned their goods for the sake of rum were favourite customers of the Jew, for they were never done bringing; their cry seemed to be, 'Give! give!' and they were more sure to leave the articles unredeemed than the first class. You need not think that the poor and the drunkard were Mordecai's only patrons; many in respectable, and especially in gay, society knew the shop and its master. The latter was strict in regard to his religion, but did not let it interfere too much with his business. On his Sabbath he had the shop left open, but hired a boy to attend it. He abstained from all meats forbidden in Moses' law, and ate none but what had been dressed by one of his own sect. He read a portion of the law nearly every day, and said his prayers three times a day. 'T is true he read the portions in such a hurried manner that in a half hour after he could not have told you six words of it, and mumbled over the prayers behind the counter with a heart full of worldly business; but the ceremony was gone through with, and that was sufficient for Mordecai. He went to the synagogue on his Sabbath, and on feast and fast-days besides. His great hope for his children, aside from the world, was to see them grow up Jews in the strictest sense of the word, and he taught them to despise all other sects.

He seldom swore, and considered himself strictly honest. In fact, in his own estimation, Mordecai was a very devout person, pure by birth, exemplary in character, and upright in heart. He prided himself in being a Jew, a descendant of Abraham. His secret feeling was much

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like the Pharisee's when he said, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.'

The opinion of our friend in regard to his character was not a correct one. He was a Jew, there was no disputing that. He had the cunning and avarice which characterise many Jews as well as Gentiles. He didn't steal exactly, but was far from honest in his dealings with others, and he loved money almost to idolatry. These traits showed in his countenance; his small, black eyes looked hungrily at the customers when they entered the shop, and said, almost as plainly as words could, 'I hope you have brought something worth while.' His forehead was low, his face thin, and the high cheek bones were very prominent. The lower part of his face was covered with a bushy beard, which was seldom cut, for Mordecai liked to have it fall over his breast. His skin was yellow and greasy looking, which, with the black, bushy beard, made him rather repulsive in appearance. He was like Zacchæus, little of stature, but was rather fleshy in body and limbs. A real curiosity shop was the pawnbroker's. In the window lay watches, jewellery, spoons, and other things. Within were various shelves, and on these were larger articles, such as books, clocks, and clothes. But there were some things too bulky to stand anywhere but on the floor; and how Mordecai found room for so much in such a tiny place as his shop was of itself curious. But carpets, chairs, and even larger articles, were often brought, and safely stowed away here.

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CHAPTER II.

MORDECAI'S FAMILY.

THERE were two rooms at the back of the shop, and in them lived Mordecai and his family. It was rather a crowded place, but the Jew thought too much of money to provide a better. His wife was as pretty a little woman as you often see; gentle and kind in disposition, winning in manners. In fact, a complete contrast to her husband was Mrs. Streck.

Of course, she was a Jewess, for Mordecai would have considered his passport to heaven lost had he wedded one of another blood. Unlike her husband, however, she possessed very little cunning or love of money.

Sometimes he lamented her lack of these traits. He would say, addressing her, 'My Hannah, you could never make the shop pay if I were taken from you.'

'Never mind that, man,' would she answer in a cheerful tone; 'you are in good health yet, and the boy is growing.'

Their only daughter, Naomi, fortunately resembled her mother in appearance and disposition. Her dark eyes were large and lustrous, her black hair hung in glossy ringlets,

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and her face was oval in shape, and fair in complexion. She was the eldest child, and the mother's help and comfort. At the time the events of this story commenced she was eleven years old.

The next child, Hesed, was a second Mordecai in looks, and bid fair, the father thought, to equal himself in keenness and sagacity. The baby, Jacob, resembled a dough baby in appearance, and had about as much expression in its chubby face. He was a great pet, and the family were very fond of him, chiefly because he was so fat; though Naomi sometimes wished he had a little less flesh, when she was staggering under his weight. The fond parents never knew of this secret wish, and they admired their baby boy to their hearts' content.

Nonie, as the children called her, was often left in the shop by her father while he went out for a walk or on business. At such times the child amused herself by looking over the watches and jewellery, or by reading the titles of the ponderous volumes on the shelves, for it was seldom any but large books found their way hither.

One day, however, the little girl, while searching for amusement, found a volume so small that she could put it into her pocket, and so beautifully bound, that she thought it would be delightful to own it. It was covered with a rich, dark velvet, and the clasps and borders, Nonie was sure, must be gold, for they were so bright and pretty.

'What is the name of this lovely book?' exclaimed the child, as she opened it to find out its title. '"New Testament!" bah! that's the Gentiles' book; and father says

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it 's a very bad one. He knows.' And she carefully closed and clasped the volume, and was just about returning it to the shelf, when a bright thought struck her. 'I will read some in it,' thought she; 'and then I'll know something about the Gentile people, as father calls them.'

She opened at the eighteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, and read it and the two following chapters. What particularly attracted her attention were the words recorded in the last two verses of the twentieth chapter. They read as follows: 'And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.'

'"That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ,"' repeated Nonie thoughtfully; 'but it isn't right to believe that! How awfully the Jews treated Him, though! suppose He was the real Messiah? but He wasn't; father says so.' The book was laid aside before Mordecai returned, for Nonie fancied he would be displeased at her reading it. 'But I will read some more when I get a chance,' thought she. The chance never came, however, for before she left the shop a lady called for the little book, and the disappointed child saw it no more. She had no time to brood over her disappointment, for the shop-master returned, and bade her go immediately to her mother, who needed her assistance. Nonie obeyed, but went with lagging steps, for she had expected a good play after watching the shop so faithfully.

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'Oh, dear!' she exclaimed, as she entered the little back room, where the busy mother was at work.

'Why, Nonie, what 's the matter?' asked Mrs. Streck, in surprise.

'I don't want to work, and I wanted to read the book a lady took away.'

'You need not work; you can just mind sweet Jacob, and let mother work,' said the other by way of comfort.

'Jakie 's heavy, and wants to pull my hair,' said Nonie, in the same complaining tone as before.

'Heavy, is he? the treasure!' and the fond mother stooped over the cradle to kiss her baby. 'It 's only because he 's such a fine, healthy boy; and we wouldn't have him any lighter, would we, darling?'

The dull baby looked wonderingly at his mother, as if he wished to know all about the matter, and this amused his sister so much that she laughed outright.

'Come, my Nonie, sit by the cradle; I am preparing for Sabbath, you know,' said Mrs. Streck, well pleased at her daughter's change of humour. The latter sat down by the cradle and amused her brother to the best of her ability. Through the week Mrs. Streck's rooms presented rather an untidy appearance, but on Friday the utmost pains were taken to make them clean and neat.

The uncarpeted floors were scrubbed and sanded, the wooden chairs rubbed till they shone, the beds made up so high you might almost fancy it would need a ladder to reach the top of them, and the few ornaments on the mantel and bureau were dusted and arranged quite tastily.

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Perhaps, you would like to know how the Sabbath was spent in our friend's family. Well, it commenced an hour before sunset on Friday, and was finished when the first stars appeared the next evening. It was just an hour before the sun went down, that Mordecai closed the shop on the Friday of which we have been speaking; and he would have told you that, ever since he had been its master, it had been closed every Friday an hour before sunset.

His allowing it to be kept open the day following, he said, was because it was strictly necessary, so much business was done by the Christians on his Sabbath; but the true reason was, our friend's great love of gain. He could not bear to lose the gains of one day out of seven.

As soon as the shop was closed he hastened to the 'living room,' where he found the children already dressed in Sabbath-day apparel, for they always accompanied him to the synagogue on the Sabbath eve.

Baby Jakie kept his mother at home, but he was growing older every day, and so that state of things was not expected to last. The father was soon ready, and the trio started. Mordecai and his son kept up a constant conversation as they walked, but Nonie was too full of thought for that. The words in the book kept recurring to her mind, and she longed to see them once more.

'Perhaps Jesus was the Christ,' said she to herself. 'I think I will ask mother about it; she won't be angry, I 'm sure.'

Nonie's meditations were interrupted when they

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reached the synagogue, for at the door they met acquaintances, with whom they exchanged quiet greetings; and when they were once inside, and the service had commenced, she had no thought for anything else, for she was quite a devout listener. The service consisted in the chanting of prayers by the priest, and the reading of a portion of the law by a rabbi, who explained some parts as he read.

When they returned to their home, Mrs. Streck laid a clean white cloth upon the table, and on it two loaves of bread, which she had baked on Friday; over these she spread snowy napkins. This was done to commemorate the manna falling from heaven. There being two loaves showed that a double portion fell on Friday. The napkins and the cloth were in memory of the dew lying under and over the manna. A bottle of wine was brought next. Then the family gathered around the table. Mordecai poured a cup of the wine, at the same time repeating these verses: 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.' (Genesis ii. 1—5.) He then thanked God, and enjoined his family to reverence the Sabbath. After blessing the wine he drank of it, and gave some to each of the others. The bread was blessed, and distributed in almost the same manner. After supper he repeated grace, mak-

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ing particular mention of the Sabbath. In the morning Mordecai stayed at home with the baby, and the mother went with the older children to the synagogue.

The morning service was as follows: Prayers were chanted suitable to the day; a lesson was read from the law, and a corresponding one from the prophets. When the reading was concluded, prayer was offered for the peace and prosperity of the government under which they lived, in observance of the directions in Jeremiah xxix. 7: 'And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.' God was then asked to deliver them from captivity, and return them to their beloved Jerusalem, where they could observe the Sabbath in accordance with Jehovah's commands. Several more prayers were offered, and then the morning service was concluded.

Dinner was on the table when our friends reached home, for Mordecai was quite handy in the house. At this meal they observed the same religious ceremonies as at supper. The synagogue service in the afternoon was similar to that of the morning, with the exception that the rabbi preached a short sermon on the lesson from the law previously read.

This time, when our friends returned home, the Sabbath was nearly ended, and the children seated themselves at a window to watch for the first stars, and very glad were they when three could be seen.

'Ma,' said Hesed, 'Sabbath is over. Come, Nonie, let's play a game of some kind.'

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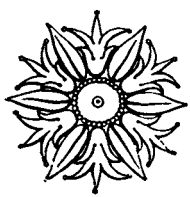
Mordecai did not express his pleasure, but secretly was as glad as the children.

His Sabbath was tedious to him, and it was always a relief when it was ended and he could return to his pipe and his business. It was not lawful for him to smoke on that day, for no good Jew will light a pipe on the Sabbath.

All food is prepared on Friday for the day following. Sometimes the Jews hire one of another sect to light a lamp or fire for them at that sacred time. Such Jews truly draw nigh unto God with their mouths, and honour Him with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. (Matthew xv. 8.)



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CHAPTER III.

THE NEW NEIGHBOURS.

WE have almost left Nonie while describing the Jewish Sabbath, but will return to her now. The perplexed little girl found no opportunity on the above mentioned day to speak to her mother about the book and Jesus, for she dared not name the subject in her father's presence, knowing it would excite him to anger. But on the first day of the week Mordecai and his family went out to visit among their friends, and while on the road Nonie ventured to unburden her mind to her mother. Mrs. Streck fairly turned pale as her daughter told of reading in the dreadful book, and of the thoughts that had since troubled her.

'O Nonie!' cried she, 'let me never hear you mention that subject again. I would rather see the ground cover you than to see you tainted with a false belief. The father must not be told of this. Why, child, you are unclean as long as you harbour such thoughts. You know one of our sacred prayers says: "Let there be no hope to them who apostatise from the true religion; and let heretics,

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how many soever they be, all perish as in a moment." Our Messiah will surely come, and to us, for we are the true people of God. Will you try, daughter, to forget all you read in the book?'

Nonie promised earnestly enough, for her mother's words and manner rather alarmed her. But the matter was hidden in her heart, though at that time she believed her mother was right, and that it was sinful to speak of it.

The first day of the week Mordecai considered almost wasted; for on it he could do very little business, and, consequently, could gain but little.

He, however, made many a plan on that day, and when any of these plans were successfully carried out, he, with a satisfied smile, would say, 'The Christian Sunday is a lucky day for the Jew.'

On the Sabbath to which we have referred our friend conceived what he thought a brilliant idea; and when the visiting was over, and he sat at his own fireside with pipe in hand, it was unfolded to his wife.

'I tell you, my Hannah,' said he, 'I have a little money saved—only a *little*, you know. But it might be enough, may be, to enlarge this house, that is, to put rooms above, so we might have a tenant. When a man receives each month a few shillings for rent he has something to look to besides his shop. The children are growing, and must be fed.' And Mordecai sighed deeply, as if to add effect to his words, then lighted his pipe and smoked vigorously while awaiting his wife's reply.

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Mrs. Streck seldom opposed her husband; it did no good, and sometimes a great deal of harm. She believed that in most things his knowledge and skill were greater than her own; besides, she was of a gentle, tractable disposition, while he was stubborn and unyielding. She would have been very glad of more room for their own family, but did not think it best to say so, knowing that Mordecai would think they could not afford it. They were not poor, she knew. The sum in the bank would still be large when the building expenses were paid; but her husband thought the only way to make his wife saving was to plead poverty. After a few moments' thought, she said, 'You know best, Mordecai; I shall be pleased if you build.'

The pawnbroker would have been astonished had he met with opposition from his wife, yet it was highly gratifying to have her assent so readily to his proposal.

'You are a good woman, Hannah,' said he, patting her playfully on the shoulder; then added, 'the building shall be done.'

The two children had listened eagerly to all that had been said, and were delighted at the thought of having anything done that would create an excitement and bustle.

'When will it be commenced?' asked Hesed.

'I will see the carpenters soon, perhaps to-morrow, replied the father.

The latter was no procrastinator where he saw a chance to add to his gains; consequently the carpenters were en-

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gaged on the following day, and before another Sabbath the work was begun. Nonie and her brother had many a fine play in the unfinished rooms.

When the building was begun it was midsummer, and in the first week of September Mordecai was ready for his tenant. He tried in vain to find a Jewish family to take the rooms, and at length, reluctantly, let them to an American widow lady and her daughter.

As Mordecai's tenants have much to do with our story, we wish to give our readers an introduction to them, just as they are about to take possession of their new home. Mrs. Bent, the lady, had been parted by death from her husband just one year before, and was then left with two children—a son of eleven and a daughter nine years of age. Three months after the boy was laid by his father's side, and the bereaved woman felt in her anguish that there was no sorrow like unto her sorrow.

She was poor as well as heart-stricken, but was a true child of God, and He supported her when all earthly props failed.

She had a pale, patient face, on which sorrow and submission were written; but it was an attractive face in spite of its sad expression. Alice, her daughter, had a plump, rosy face, blue eyes that were brimful of merriment, and a head that was covered with short brown curls. She was a sweet child, social and kind in disposition, intelligent in mind, and winning in manners.

With these strangers Mordecai meant to have little intercourse. He would receive the rent from them, and

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allow them to stay as long as it was paid promptly; but they should be strangers, and strangers only. Mrs. Bent took possession of her new home on the second Monday of September, which was a lovely day for moving. The pawnbroker's two children were out of doors almost the whole day, and watched all the proceedings of the movers with curious eyes. No sooner did Alice appear than she became the subject of their remarks.

'Pooh!' said Hesed contemptuously, 'she 's a little creature; we can't have any fun with her.'

Hesed was sorry the new-comer did not happen to be a boy, and he wished to cloud Nonie's bright dreams if possible—not a very laudable wish in a brother, certainly.

Nonie was delighted at the thought of having a companion, and answered quickly, 'I 'm sure she 's very sweet; see how prettily she nods her head at us.'

Hesed acknowledged that Alice was pretty, but said, 'That don't make any difference; father won't allow us to play with her.'

These words caused Nonie to look sad for a moment, but brightening up almost instantly, she replied, 'Father will let us play with her when he sees how nice she is.'

'You know better than that, Nonie! father is afraid of them because they are Christians,' said Hesed, with a knowing shake of the head.

Just at this moment their mother called them into the house, so the conversation was brought to an end. The following morning, while Nonie was seated on the floor

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beside her baby brother, there was a light tap on the door, which Mrs. Streck immediately opened.

'Good morning!' exclaimed little Alice in a musical voice; 'mamma said I could come to see the baby.' And she walked into the room, and seated herself by Nonie's side.

Mrs. Streck had not meant to be sociable with her new neighbours, but was fairly taken by surprise, especially as the child had desired to see baby Jacob.

'Oh, what a pretty boy he is!' exclaimed the visitor in tones of admiration.

The mother looked with pleased eyes at her baby's face, which was round as the full moon, but not so beautiful.

'How old is he?' asked Alice.

'Nine months old,' answered Nonie. The latter wished to get a share of the visitor's attention, and was not disappointed, for Alice, turning quickly to her, said, 'Won't it be nice to play together?'

'I think so,' answered the other quietly.

'Of course it will; look here!' and the child pulled from her pocket a roll of tiny dresses and a little doll.

'That's very nice,' said Nonie, and she looked over the dresses and admired the dolly, but was not enthusiastic enough to suit their owner, who exclaimed, 'When I like anything I jump about, so that mamma begs me to stop!'

Nonie, opening her black eyes to their widest extent, said, in tones of astonishment, 'That's a queer way to do! you mustn't expect me to act so.'

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Alice laughed as if amused, and then fell to caressing the baby so energetically that he began to cry.

'There, that's too bad!' she exclaimed. 'There, there, he needn't be afraid of Alice,' said the would-be nurse in soothing tones as she patted the baby's head.

This only made matters worse, and Mrs. Streck was forced to stop her work, and take the frightened child in her arms.

'You must excuse me,' said Alice as she took her departure.

'Certainly, little miss,' replied Mrs. Streck pleasantly.

'I guess now I'll go to see Mr. Mordecai,' thought the former, as she walked through the hall and into the street.

'Good morning, Mr. Mordecai,' was her pleasant greeting when she entered the shop.

The pawnbroker nodded a reply, and went on with his work.

'Are you busy, Mr. Mordecai?' asked the visitor, nothing daunted by her cool reception.

'Yes,' was the short answer.

'Well, I won't stay long, but I have something to talk to you about,' and Alice edged up close to her unwilling listener, and continued, in a low, confidential tone, 'I have been to call on your folks this morning, and I like your little girl; but don't you think she's bashful—or—something?'

'I don't know,' said Mordecai, smiling in spite of himself.

'You'll find she is; but I want us to be real good

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friends. Will you let her come up in my room sometimes?'

'Oh, yes, I think so,' said the other carelessly.

'Good-bye, and thank you,' returned the visitor, as she tripped away again.

It was no use trying to be distant with such a child, and our Jewish friends did not try long. Hesed, before a week had gone by, forgave her for being a girl, and found in her as charming a companion as ever he knew. Nonie enjoyed her society, and learned to love her; and the baby grew so fond of her, that often Alice's voice would soothe him when nothing else could. This was enough to win the hearts of the parents, and the little girl became so great a favourite with Mordecai, that he declared her almost equal to his own Nonie. Mrs. Bent was obliging and kind, and so won favour for herself aside from the fact of being Alice's mother. This lady had prayed that God would bless her intercourse with the Jew's family, and cause them to regard her as a friend, and He answered her prayer. He always answers sincere prayer, though not always in the way we expect.

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CHAPTER IV.

SOWING THE SEED.

RS. BENT carried on Alice's education at home, for she could not bear to have this only child spend day after day away from her. Mordecai's children were attending school when the above-named lady came to reside with them; but their doing so caused their parents many an anxious hour, for they were sore afraid of their hearing something that would weaken their faith in what their parents considered the only true religion. Mordecai and his wife felt that it would be less of a trial to bury their children, than to see them grow up heretics.

These parents watched Mrs. Bent very closely for awhile, fearful of her religious influence; but gradually their prejudices wore away. The widow was so quiet and unobtrusive, and withal so kind, that there was nothing to keep suspicion alive.

At length Mordecai was led to propose for Nonie and Hesed to study with Alice.

'But,' said his wife, 'the mother 's a Christian; she may lead them wrong.'

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'We can watch them, and forbid her to read her sacred book to them,' replied the father.

Mrs. Streck objected no further; why should she? If her husband thought it best, she was sure it would be right. The proposal was made to Mrs. Bent, who readily agreed to it. It was gratifying to her for several reasons. Some of these were as follows: Alice would be more interested in her studies if she had companions; Mordecai's children would be under religious influence; and, lastly, she herself would be glad of the sum their father offered to pay for teaching them.

She promised to abstain from reading the New Testament in their hearing, thinking it best to wait and pray, believing, if she were faithful, God would bring the children, and perhaps the parents, to Himself. She knew in that case the now rejected book would be a priceless treasure. The children commenced their studies, and soon became so interested in their books and teacher, that the hours spent with them they thought the pleasantest part of the day. Mrs. Bent had not promised to withhold religious truths from them, and faithfully did she try to loosen their hold on error, and lead them aright. For the first few days she avoided mentioning the precious name of Jesus; but after the children had learned to prize their little school, she grew bolder; and one day, when they begged for a story, told them the old, old story, which to them was so new and strange.

The little Jews listened eagerly to all their teacher said, and when the story was finished quite an animated

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conversation ensued. Hesed stoutly maintained the Jew's right to treat Jesus as they did. Nonie was less vehement, but said, 'The Jews are God's people, and I know they are too good to do wrong.'

She then told about the little book, and the thoughts she had had after reading in it.

'O Nonie! I'm just going to tell father of you,' said Hesed threateningly.

'Please don't, Hesed,' pleaded Nonie in alarm.

'He won't, I'm sure he won't,' said Mrs. Bent in a persuasive voice.

All this had no effect on Hesed; but when Alice shook her head reprovingly at him, and talked confidingly to Nonie, he suddenly changed his mind, and declared he was only in fun, and wouldn't think of telling.

This was not true, for he had meant to turn tale-bearer, and would have done so but for Alice. The last-named person's good opinion was worth a great deal to Hesed, and he didn't wish to lose it. Neither child forgot what they that day heard about Jesus, but it did not seem to influence their hearts or actions immediately. Many an hour did Mrs. Bent spend in the pawnbroker's little back room with his gentle wife, who greatly enjoyed her society. Sometimes Mordecai would steal in and sit awhile when their neighbour was present, for he liked her intelligent conversation.

'What do you think of the Jews as a people, neighbour?' asked he one day with a tone and manner that seemed to say, You certainly can find no fault with them.

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This question was unexpected to Mrs. Bent, and before answering she lifted up her heart to God, for she hoped to improve what seemed an opportunity for good.

At length she said, 'I will ask you a question in return, Mr. Streck; why are the Jewish people scattered over all lands and countries, and yet kept distinct?'

'We are God's people, and He has kept us distinct and separate,' replied Mordecai.

'And you are scattered over all lands because of your sins, for God by the mouth of His prophets said it should be so. You know why the Jews were captives in Babylon for seventy years, do you not, Mr. Streck?'

'Because of their sins, I suppose,' said the other, who knew but little about the prophetical or historical books of the Bible.

Mrs. Bent opened her little pocket companion, and read these verses: '"But if ye shall at all turn from following Me, ye or your children, and will not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for My name, will I cast out of My sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people: and at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt,

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and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil." (1 Kings ix. 6—9.) Here it is said, the Jews should be cut off out of the land God had given them if they kept not His commandments; and the sin of idolatry is especially spoken of, for the Hebrews were, before the Babylonish captivity, very much inclined to go after other gods. The seventy years in Babylon cured their idolatry, but did not bring them to true repentance.'

'Then you would say we were again dispersed on account of our continued sinfulness, would you not?' said Mordecai, who had not expected such an answer to his question, and was vexed with himself for asking it; but his curiosity was aroused, and he wished his neighbour to express herself more fully.

'Again they wandered far from God, and He caused them to become subject to the Roman power. Their most heinous sin, however, was the denial and crucifixion of the Saviour.'

Mrs. Bent paused, astonished at her own boldness.

'We never denied our Messiah,' said Mordecai excitedly, 'but a bold, vile impostor, who strove to become our king. Do you think our Saviour would come in humility and poverty? No; He will come as a mighty king. Then will our enemies be cast out of Jerusalem, and we shall return to our own land in triumph. The glorious temple will be rebuilt, and we shall worship as our fathers did, only more perfectly, for the Christ will teach us all things.'

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'And do you believe what the prophets have written concerning Christ?'

'Believe! why, every good Jew believes Moses and the prophets.'

'Then let me read a few verses that Moses wrote concerning you as a people'; and Mrs. Bent opened her Bible as she spoke.

'No, no! that would be useless; am I a Jew, and know not Moses?' replied Mordecai proudly, as he opened the door to leave the room.

This conversation was followed by others on the same subject; and in these talks Mordecai disclosed such hatred at the very name of Jesus, that Mrs. Bent sometimes felt as if she were conversing with one of those who at the judgment-seat cried, 'Crucify Him! crucify Him!' And often would she exclaim to herself, 'If it were not that all things are possible with God, I should despair of this Jew's salvation.'

With the gentle little wife it was different. She listened with apparent interest when the important subject was discussed, and seemed so desirous to learn that Mrs. Bent hoped some seed was being cast, where it would spring up and bring forth fruit to the honour and glory of God. It is written, 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.' The good lady believed God's Word, and she prayed and laboured on.

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CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE CHILDREN.

THE Jew's children made rapid progress under their faithful teacher's guidance, and this so pleased their father that he was willing to bear with the heresy of his neighbour, as long as the little ones remained untainted. But he knew not the power of Christian influence, and could not realise that a little leaven might leaven the whole lump. Both Nonie and Hesed were daily receiving invaluable lessons, aside from those learned in their school books; and Mrs. Bent laboured with them, firmly believing that her labours would be blessed.

Alice's influence over her companions was great, and her mother hoped much from this, for she trusted her little girl was a Christian. The child herself could not seem to understand that utter rejection of the Saviour was possible; and she would refer, even in her play, to religious things with as much artless simplicity as to any other subject. Nonie listened to what she had to say, and

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would sometimes ask questions on the subject; but Hesed generally tried to appear quite indifferent. One day, when the two little girls were in the street at play, Alice suddenly exclaimed, 'Oh, here comes my Sunday-school teacher!'

When the latter came up to the children, she greeted her scholar with a kiss, and then asked, 'And who is this little girl?'

'That's Nonie Streck,' was Alice's reply.

'Does she know the Friend of little children?' asked the teacher.

'Do you mean Mrs. Bent?' said Nonie, with an earnest, inquiring look.

The lady smiled kindly as she answered, 'I know Mrs. Bent is a dear friend of little children, but she is not the one I referred to.'

'But, Miss Doty,' interrupted Alice, 'Nonie is a Jewess, and don't know Jesus very well.'

'Then, Alice, you can teach her about the Friend I meant, can't you?'

'Yes, ma'am,' was the simple reply.

'I was going into your house, Alice, to ask of your mother a favour; but my time is limited, so I will entrust you with the message. I think you won't forget it.' And the teacher's eyes twinkled merrily as she spoke.

"No; indeed, I won't,' was the reply.

'Well, tell mamma that I am going to have the little girls of my class to take tea with me on Thursday, and I should like you to come, that is, if she thinks best.'

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'And Nonie too?' asked the delighted child.

'If you mean, may Nonie come with you, I answer, yes; we shall be very glad to have her.' So saying, Miss Doty went on her way, and left the children to talk over the anticipated pleasure. This they did, sitting on the steps. When the subject had been somewhat exhausted, Nonie asked, 'Whom did the lady mean, Alice, by the friend she spoke of? was it her father?'

'Why, no, Nonie; it was Jesus; don't you know how He loves the little children? But, there! I forgot you don't love Him.'

'No; but ever since I read in that little book about Him, I sometimes wish I could believe He was the Christ, for the real Messiah 's so long in coming;' and Nonie looked wistful and sad. But after a moment's pause she continued, in quite a different tone, 'He wasn't the Christ, because father says so, and he knows. He says, "The Jews will very soon know their Messiah, for they are the people He's coming to save."'

'Why, Nonie! it's wicked to talk so. Jesus won't love you if you speak like that. Of course, He's the Saviour, because mamma says so; besides that, I know He is.'

Hesed came up in time to hear the last part of the conversation; and he, turning to Alice, said, 'Now, Alice Bent, you talk just as if your mother knew more than my father, and she don't, because men and boys always know more than women and girls. Father says, if it wasn't for your mother's heresy, he'd think her quite a sensible

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woman; by heresy, he means all such silly talk about the Messiah, and all that.'

Alice had a quick, passionate temper, which now was pretty well roused. She had never esteemed Hesed very highly, and it was extremely aggravating to hear him say her darling mother talked silly.

'Hesed Streck, you ugly, mean boy! you had better be still. I heard a man say once that the Jews were the worst people on earth; they'd steal, cheat, and lie, just for money'; and with this passionate outburst Alice ran into the house, but not before Hesed answered, tauntingly, 'Your mother said, "Loving Jesus made people kind and gentle"; I think you must love Him, don't you?'

These words recalled the angry girl to her senses, and she ran sobbing upstairs and threw herself in her mother's arms.

'O mamma, I 've been so naughty!' she cried.

'Well, there, wipe the tears away and tell me all about it,' said Mrs. Bent soothingly.

The child faltered forth her story, and ended by asking in a despairing tone, 'Now, mamma, what can I do?'

'And what do you think you had better do?' inquired her mother gravely.

'Ask God to forgive me?'

'Yes; and what about Hesed?'

'O mamma, I don't want to tell him I 'm sorry, 'cause he said you talked *silly*.'

'Very well, dear; do what you think is right.'

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The little girl went softly into the bedroom, where she stayed perhaps ten minutes.

When she came forth it was with a sorry, though firm, look on her face. Going close to her mother's side, she whispered, 'I 've concluded to ask Hessie to forgive me; shall I do it now?'

'Yes; I think I should,' said her mother approvingly.

Away went the child, eager to find Hesed, and have the disagreeable task done. The object of her search was on the sidewalk, in an earnest conversation with his sister.

So engrossed were they, that the little penitent was standing before them ere they knew of her approach. Hesed had forgotten all about the angry talk, and began to laugh at Alice's woe-begone face, but stopped suddenly, when she said, with quivering lips: 'O Hessie, I 'm so sorry I talked so cross, and made you think less of Jesus. Will you please to forgive me?'

'Now, Alice, what 's the use of caring about that? We 're just as good friends as ever, aren't we?'

'I want to be, Hessie; and you 'll love Jesus, just a little, won't you?'

'Of course! I do *now*!' said Hesed emphatically.

Alice was delighted with this reply, but it would have damped her pleasure had she heard what the artful boy told Nonie, when she questioned him in regard to the truthfulness of this assertion.

'It was only to please Allie,' said he; 'I knew she 'd begin to cry if I said no, and I never like to get a girl

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crying, because the more a fellow tries to comfort her the worse she gets.'

After peace had thus been made, Nonie, addressing Alice, said, 'Now I will tell you what we were talking about: you know what pretty breastpins and things there are in the shop?'

Alice nodded assent.

'Don't you think it would be delightful to wear some of them when you are dressed nicely?'

"Yes; I think it would,' was Alice's ready reply.

'Well, some day when father's away we'll all take a walk, and make ourselves look grand. You know it won't be any harm, because we'll put everything back.'

This last assertion was in answer to the questioning look on Alice's face, for Nonie didn't mean to trouble herself about the right or wrong of the matter. Alice, after a little consideration, declared she thought the plan perfectly delightful.

'And what would you like to wear?' asked Nonie.

'A breastpin and a ring,' answered Alice.

'Well, I will wear ear-rings, and Hesed a watch.'

The plan was now considered complete, and the three agreed to keep their own counsel and watch for an opportunity. Well would it have been if Alice had obeyed the whispers of conscience, and gone to her mother with the secret. But she did not do so; in fact, the anticipated visit at her teacher's almost drove it from her mind. It was on Tuesday that Miss Doty gave the children their invitation, so Thursday was not long in coming. Morde-

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cai readily consented for Nonie to go, telling his wife, when talking the matter over, that the girl would get no harm when with Alice; and adding, with a wise nod of the head, 'My Hannah, if all Christians were like these, our people would have their rights restored, and the Messiah would hasten His coming.'

Naomi overheard these remarks, and repeated them to Mrs. Bent, who felt hopeful therefrom. Surely, thought she, Mordecai, unawares, is being drawn toward the light. The little girls looked very attractive when robed for the party. It was winter, and they wore bright crimson merino dresses and white aprons. So nearly alike were they dressed, that Alice declared every one would take them for sisters.

Mrs. Bent smiled at this, for the happy young faces were so unlike.

Nonie, with her dark eyes, was handsome and brilliant; while dear little Alice was chubby and sweet.

The teacher's residence was in the suburbs of the city, and it took almost half an hour in the tram-car to reach it.

Alice entertained her friend on the road by a description of the place. We will let her use her own words here.

'The house,' said she, 'is a great square building, and has a large piazza in front, with oh! what big pillars to support it! The whole is snowy white, and every window is covered with green shutters. Then the walks in front are broad, and white with gravel; and even at this time of

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year they have plenty of flowers, because there 's a hot-house in the garden. Inside the house everything is very fine. They have velvet carpet, sofas, a big book-case, a piano, and lots of other pretty things.'

Nonie listened with interest to all this, and quite anxiously inquired about the family they were going to see. The other, nothing loath, told that Miss Doty's father was a doctor, that her mother was almost the best woman in the world, and that there was a sick sister, almost as pretty as an angel.

Just here Nonie, with the quiet manner that so often damped her friend's enthusiasm, interrupted to ask the latter if she had ever seen an angel.

'Why, no,' said Alice impatiently; 'what do you ask that for?'

'Oh, because I don't see that you can know how they look if you haven't seen them.'

'Well, I can; they 're just as white as they can be, and have wings, only you can't see the wings all the time, because they 're folded up.'

'Has that sick lady got wings?' inquired Nonie.

'May be she has,' said the other, trying to look wise and mysterious.

The idea had never entered her head before, but she could not bear to appear ignorant where she had professed to know so much.

Nothing more was said at that time about angels or their wings either, but both children resolved secretly to find out whether the sick lady had wings or not. When

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they arrived and were admitted to the house, in answer to their timid ring, they found the other guests there, enjoying themselves finely. These were all classmates of Alice, and seemed delighted to see her; but Nonie, strange and timid, would have soon wished herself at home if Miss Doty had not taken her in hand, and made her acquainted with the children and the place. Then, oh, what lovely times they had! There seemed to be no end to the lively games. Miss Doty, as Nonie said afterward, 'knew just what they liked to play, and enjoyed herself with them.'

Before tea-time the latter whispered to Alice, 'Sister Grace would like to see you and your companion.'

'Oh that would be delightful!' cried Alice, who had been going to ask to see Miss Grace.

Miss Doty, taking the children each by the hand, led them into her sister's chamber.

Nonie was surprised to see a sick lady look so fresh and beautiful. Grace Doty was dying of a lingering disease, but her face showed few marks of its effects. Her cheeks were bright and rosy, and her eyes large and lustrous, and few would have said that Alice had overated her beauty, for hers was, indeed, a lovely countenance.

'Well!' she exclaimed as the former came near her couch, 'it's been a long time since we have met. How is mamma? and how have you been?'

When these questions had been satisfactorily answered, Grace, turning to Nonie with the same sweet smile with which she had addressed the other, said, 'So this is a little Jewish friend, is it?'

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'Yes; I'm Naomi Streck. Alice told me about you, and I don't think you look sick one mite.'

'Ah, Naomi, I 'm not far from my Father's house,' said the sick lady sadly.

'Why, Alice told me that Dr. Doty was your father, ma'am!' exclaimed Nonie in surprise. Then looking around with admiring eyes, she asked, 'Is your Father's house prettier than this?'

'Oh, yes; much finer. The walls of His city are made up of the most beautiful stones, the gates are of pearl, and there 's a river running through the city, which is as clear as crystal. Besides all this, its streets are paved with gold.'

'Gold! why, I should think people would steal it!' and Nonie looked the picture of wonder.

'No one steals anything there, Naomi.'

'I think then my father 'd like to go, especially if they let you get some of the gold, because we 're poor, you know. But may be they don't have pawnbrokers there, do they?'

'Oh, yes,' said Grace, much amused at the child's earnestness.

'And is business good too?'

'Well, no; not that kind of business. In fact, people don't do any buying or selling in that city. Every one that goes there has a fair mansion; no one there is ever sick; none ever die, and there 's no night there. And oh, how many children my Father has there! He has invited you to come, Naomi.'

Nonie's eyes grew bright, and she looked both

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pleased and puzzled, till Alice cried out, 'It 's heaven, Nonie!'

'Oh!' said the other, in a disappointed tone.

'Yes; I soon expect to be in heaven. Can't you and Alice meet me there, Naomi?' said Grace.

'I want to,' replied Alice, while the tears filled her blue eyes and threatened to deluge her face. 'Don't you, Nonie?'

'Yes; only I' d like to live a long time first.'

Grace then told them to ask Jesus to help them to live for Him, so that death might find them ready to depart to live with *Him*. Before the children left the room the sick girl said to them, 'I should like you to come together next week and spend an afternoon with me.'

'We will if we may!' cried Alice, pleased enough, you may be sure.

The party of girls sat down to a loaded tea-table, and we all know that children are apt to do justice to warm biscuits, preserved fruits, cake, and confectionery; therefore you will not be surprised to hear, that the table was lightened of its load in a very short time. After this repast Miss Doty proposed that they should look over the next Sabbath's lesson together, so the little group assembled in the parlour for that purpose. The teacher provided Bibles for all, and each, with the exception of Nonie, turned to the chapter which contained the subject of the lesson. It was the eighth chapter of Mark, the first ten verses of which tell of the feeding of the four thousand on the seven loaves.

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Nonie refused to take the Bible offered her, and at first paid but little attention to the lesson; but as the teacher proceeded she became interested, and listened with wonder. We will not repeat all the questions and answers of the occasion, but tell you in part what was said.

'Notice in the second verse,' said Miss Doty, 'the reason Christ gives for wanting to feed the multitude: "I have *compassion* on them." What a beautiful thought that He who saw the hearts of all that multitude—the unworthiness of many of them, and the want of love that part of them, at least, had for Himself—could say, "I have compassion on them"! He proceeds to say, "They have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat." We must not think from this that all the people had fasted three days; this is not inferred; but their food was gone, and there was no place in the wilderness to buy more. Jesus returns thanks before He distributes the food. How many there are who sit down to sumptuous tables, and eat without one thought of the Giver of good gifts! There were four thousand men who partook of that meal, and, probably, some women and children. After all had eaten and were filled, there were seven baskets full of fragments taken up. We might think if Jesus could so easily provide food, the fragments would not have been cared for, but all is carefully gathered up. And in another place we read where He commands them to let nothing be lost or wasted.'

'Now, children,' said Miss Doty, 'what do we learn from this account?'

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'That Christ has great pity,' said one.

'And great power,' said another.

'That He 's kind to bad people as well as to good,' said Alice.

'That it 's wicked to be wasteful,' said one little girl, whose besetting sin was wastefulness.

'These answers are all good,' said Miss Doty, 'and we may learn, also, to ask God's blessing on our food, and to thank Him for it. It may teach us to go to Jesus for daily bread and other temporal blessings. He had compassion on those people because they were hungry, and He will pity us if we need food, clothes, or any other earthly good; and will, if we ask Him, give us just as much as is for our good, and we ought not to want more.'

After this they all joined in singing,

'Jesu, lover of my soul,'

and then the children took their leave.

'Alice,' said Nonie after they were fairly on the road, 'I don't believe that story about the loaves; father says such things are all made up.'

Alice was rather indignant, but, remembering her quarrel with Hesed, she strove to answer quietly.

'You would believe it if you loved Jesus,' said she.

'I would love Him if father and mother would let me; but they say He isn't the Christ; and if I loved Him, and then the real Messiah was to come, I 'd be sorry, you know.'

Alice did not understand the force of this reasoning, but rather abruptly turned the subject by asking her com-

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panion if she didn't think Miss Grace lovely. 'Yes, indeed!' exclaimed Nonie. 'But,' continued she, 'how funny she talked about dying! I don't believe she 's going to die, do you?'

Alice's only answer to this was an outburst of tears; so Nonie concluded it was best to keep quiet, and they rode the rest of the way in almost utter silence, merely bidding each other good-night when they reached the shop door.

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CHAPTER VI.

ALICE IN TROUBLE.

WHEN Alice and Hesed met on the morning following the day of the party, the former entertained the latter with a glowing description of the great affair. Hesed was filled with envy, when he heard of the interesting games and delightful supper.

'Didn't they have any boys there?' he asked.

'No,' said Alice.

'Hum! I don't believe it was a real party then, for at real parties boys are always invited. I wouldn't have gone, no, not for a hundred pounds!'

'Why, Hessie, what makes you talk so? We're invited to spend the afternoon at my teacher's house next week, and I was going to ask you to go with us.'

'Well, I'd go to please you,' replied Hessie. 'But,' continued he, 'you mustn't go on Monday, because we're going to have lots of fun then. Father will be away all

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that day, and Nonie and I intend to take the walk we talked about. Will you go?'

'Of course I will, if mamma will let me; and you 'll go to my teacher's with us, won't you, Hessie?' and Alice looked as if a great deal depended on the answer to her question.

'Oh yes!' said Hesed, with assumed indifference.

He was too proud to let Alice know that the invitation was pleasing to him. Naomi talked as much about the party as did Alice, and asked Mrs. Bent many questions concerning the miracle of the loaves. The interest the child manifested in the narrative encouraged that lady greatly. 'Soon,' thought she, 'shall I see Naomi a child of God. The whole family will be brought to Jesus, and then what delightful intercourse will be ours! Even stern old Mordecai is affected by Christian influence.'

Perhaps Mrs. Bent was unduly elated, for a greater disappointment came upon her than she could have thought possible. We will not anticipate, however, but give the events in their proper order.

Although it was still winter, the month being February, the weather on Monday was beautiful, almost as bright and sunny as May. Mordecai left his family early in the morning, saying to his wife just before he closed the outer door, 'My Hannah, I shall be gone till dark; see well to the shop; you know poverty will enter our dwelling, if we neglect our business.'

The little Jewish wife held up baby Jakie to receive the father's parting kiss, and promised to see that all went

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right. The children were in high glee in anticipation of their afternoon's walk. Mrs. Bent consented for them to have a holiday as a reward for diligence in study. Naomi was employed in the shop during the morning, while Hesed and Alice amused Jakie. Nothing pleased Alice better than to have the care of her 'darling brother,' as she called the baby. He was just beginning to walk, and she never grew tired of watching his toddling steps.

'How cunning he is!' said she, and she tenderly kissed the baby's chubby face.

'He is very sweet,' said Hesed; 'but girls always like babies better than boys do. Now come on; let 's see what Nonie is doing,' and Hesed caught up the toddling baby and led the way to the shop.

Alice followed, and they entered the door together.

'Have you picked out our jewellery yet?' asked the brother with a knowing look.

'Yes, indeed. Come here, both of you,' replied Nonie, who was standing behind the small, dingy-looking counter.

The others came up in front of it, and Nonie drew from her pocket the trinkets she had selected.

'Here,' said she, 'is something for Hessie to carry,' and she handed the latter a little silver watch. 'And here, Alice, is a breastpin and finger-ring for you,' she added, as she put the little articles in her friend's hand.

'Where are the ear-rings for yourself, Nonie?' asked Alice, with eager interest.

'Here they are,' replied Nonie, and she opened a tiny box, and thus brought to view a pair of showy ear-rings.

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Don't you see,' she continued, 'they just match the breast-pin?'

'Nonie,' said Hesed somewhat anxiously, 'suppose some of these things are called for to-day, what then?'

'I thought of all that,' replied his sister with a smile. 'The watch will be called for in about two days, for father said so to a man who was in here yesterday. He showed me the ear-rings and breastpin two or three days ago, and asked me if I thought they were pretty. Father said they belonged to a lady who would call for them in about ten days.'

'Well, what about the ring?' asked Alice, as she looked with admiring eyes upon the little circlet.

'Oh, that was brought in last evening, and will not be called for until next month some time. I don't believe it is very valuable,' continued Nonie; 'it only has one white stone in it.'

The ring, however, was of greater value than all the other trinkets in the children's possession. The 'one white stone' was quite a handsome diamond, and the ring was of pure gold.

'Hessie, what shall we do with these things till afternoon comes?' asked Nonie of her brother.

'Why, I can keep them in my pocket,' was the reply of the other.

The plans were now considered complete, and Alice and Hesed took baby Jakie, and went back to the room, where Mrs. Streck was preparing dinner. Alice was sent upstairs to ask her mother to come and eat with them.

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Mrs. Bent was surprised at such an invitation, for Mordecai had always considered it polluting to eat with Gentile people, and had expressed this opinion to his gentle neighbour. But the latter would not slight the invitation so kindly given, so the two mothers and their little ones sat down to the table together. And what a cheerful meal they made of it! Even Jakie cooed and sputtered baby fashion, and thus added a share to the enjoyment. When the little girls and Hesed arose from the table they begged to be allowed to prepare for their walk without further delay.

Mrs. Streck laughingly asked if they were going to walk the whole length of the town.

'No,' said Nonie; 'we 're only going as far as the skating-pond in the great park.'

'Well, well, go on,' said Mrs. Streck; 'but do not try to skate such a day as this.'

The children were soon ready, and, after a hurried goodbye to the mothers, they started.

Scarcely had they left the house when they were joined by one of Hesed's young Jewish friends. Bennie Shafer, the new comer, was gladly welcomed by Nonie and her brother; but Alice felt her pleasure damped, for she had a secret aversion from the crafty boy. Bennie was easily persuaded to make one of the party, but quite a difficulty arose when the jewellery was produced, for the new comer stoutly declared that he would not walk with Hesed, when the latter carried a watch and he had nothing of the kind.

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'What are we to do?' asked Nonie. 'You see, Bennie, we have not any more jewellery.'

'Hesed can let me wear the watch half the time,' suggested Bennie.

'No, I won't do that,' replied his companion in a decided tone.

'Will you if I take you into the menagerie?' asked Bennie.

'I don't know what a man—what do you call it? is.'

'You living in the city and don't know what a menagerie is!' said Bennie contemptuously.

'Come, tell us about it,' cried the three in concert.

'Well, close by the great park there is a large building, where are kept all sorts of animals to show, and this they call a menagerie. They have lions, bears, tigers, elephants, and ever so many other kinds of animals. Have any of you any money?' asked Bennie, before he had finished this explanation.

Nonie produced a shilling, which she said mamma had given her to buy candy and nuts for Alice, Hesed, and herself.

'They let children into the show for sixpence apiece,' said Bennie; 'but my father's cousin is doorkeeper, and I will try to get you all in free, if Hesed will let me wear the watch all the time, and if Nonie will give me the largest share of the candies and nuts.'

After a little hesitation, the others concluded to do all that Bennie required; and Alice, to make matters pleasanter for poor Hesed, took off the breastpin and

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stuck it into the bosom of his jacket. The walk was continued in high glee, and the eight small but nimble feet carried them briskly along.

The day was so warm that sliding and skating were impossible, so they went directly to the show. Bennie had but little difficulty in persuading his friend the door-keeper to let them all inside the great building, and the wonders exceeded their expectations. There were lions and tigers, which growled and fought till it made the children shudder to hear them.

There were sea-lions, which flounced in and out of the water, and made the whole place hideous with their noise.

There were leopards, zebras, ostriches, and a great many other creatures. But what delighted our little folks most of all was a great elephant, which would take any article that was offered him into his stall, and even reached out so far as to draw a child's hat off her head, which he soon tore to pieces.

When the keeper, who was called Andrew, commanded the huge creature to kneel down, it immediately obeyed.

'Now,' said Andrew, 'one of you children may have a ride'; and he looked with amusement at the admiring group of little folks. Then catching up Alice, he placed her on the animal's trunk, nearest its head. The elephant was kind and good, and held the child, gently circling the trunk around her like a great arm.

'Now, Buck, set her down,' commanded the keeper, after the space of two or three minutes.

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This order was quickly obeyed, and Alice gave a sigh of relief when she found herself safe on the floor again.

'Buck, walk all over me!' said the keeper, laying down at the elephant's feet.

Then how curious it was to see the huge creature step over the prostrate man.

After these tricks, Buck had some apples given him for his obedience. The children lingered until four o'clock, and then were loath to leave; but Nonie declared they must go, or the father would be home before them. After they were fairly in the street again, Bennie reminded Nonie of the money in her pocket.

'Yes,' said she; 'we'll buy the treat now.'

Accordingly they directed their steps to the nearest confectioner's, but it was hard to know what kind of candy to buy. Nonie had a decided preference for chocolate-cream, Alice and Hesed wished for toffy, and Bennie loudly declared that French gum-drops were best of all. As the latter was the eldest of the four, and also the most selfish, the gum-drops gained the day.

Oh how merry they were as they walked on their way, eating the goodies they had bought; and the jewellery was almost forgotten till Nonie suddenly exclaimed,—

'Here we are at the corner of our street! now you must all take off your ornaments and give them to me.'

The watch and breastpin were soon placed in Nonie's outstretched hand, but the ring, where was the ring?

All three looked towards Alice, who stood gazing with mute astonishment and grief at her empty fingers.

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'Why don't you give Nonie the ring?' asked Bennie, breaking the ominous silence.

'It is gone—lost!' cried the frightened child, bursting into a flood of tears.

'There, Alice, don't cry so,' said Nonie soothingly, 'but tell us where you had it last.'

'I know I had it when we were in Jay Street, for it dropped off my finger then, and I picked it right up, and meant to remember that it was loose, but never thought of it again until Nonie told us to give her all the jewellery. What shall I do? what shall I do?' and Alice's tears burst forth afresh, as the dreadful truth broke over her.

'Never mind,' said Bennie; 'we'll all go back as far as Jay Street, and perhaps find it.' Alice had never thought Bennie particularly obliging before, but was now really surprised at his goodness. He seemed so sorry for her, and so anxious to find the missing article; and she remorsefully remembered once telling Nonie 'that he was a grabbing little Dutchman.'

Sorrowfully they went back to the aforesaid street, but no ring could be found, and they were forced to go home without it. This was such a dire calamity, and one so unexpected, that it was hard to know how to meet it. Bennie, who seemed eager in his desire to help them, said he thought they had better go quietly home, put the other things away, and at present say nothing about the loss. Nonie and Hesed thought this advice good, and concluded to act upon it.

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As for poor Alice, she was so frightened and grieved that she had nothing to say.

When asked if she would keep the matter from her mother she answered in the affirmative, for it was dreadful to think of that dear mother's knowing of her naughtiness. So she bathed her face at the pump, and followed her companions into the house, but dreaded so much to meet her mother that she lingered in the shop until Mordecai entered, and then hurried away almost trembling with fear.

She had never been afraid of the Jew neighbour before, though she had often heard him speak in a rough, surly manner.

'You are rather late, daughter,' said Mrs. Bent, as she entered the door; 'did you enjoy yourself?'

'Oh, yes, mamma; we went to a show, and saw elephants, and lots of other animals'; and Alice gave a confused account of the menagerie, speaking very fast and trying to appear cheerful and natural, while all the time it seemed as if she should sink through the floor.

'How did you get into the show, my dear?' asked Mrs. Bent, with some surprise.

Alice had an idea that it was best not to tell of Bennie's going with them, so after a moment's hesitation she answered, 'One of Hesed's boy friends got us all in free, because the door keeper is his cousin.'

'That was very pleasant, certainly, but you must be tired,' said the mother, as she noticed the child's flushed face.

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'Yes, mamma, I 'm very tired,' sighed Alice wearily.

Mrs. Bent soon had the simple supper ready, and Alice tried to eat, but the effort was all in vain; the food seemed to choke her, and she soon pushed back her chair from the table, with the remark, 'I 'm more tired than hungry, mamma.'

'Sleep will soon make you forget your fatigue, darling,' and Mrs. Bent smiled lovingly as she spoke.

Alice could not smile in return, neither could she talk, for one dreadful thought possessed her mind. Generally sleep visited her almost as soon as her head was laid upon the pillow, but on the night to which we refer she tossed about for one weary hour ere slumber closed her eyes. She was beginning to realise that 'the way of transgressors is hard,' and any child that turns from the right path will find the way hard.

'Oh what a tangled web we weave
When first we venture to deceive!'

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CHAPTER VII.

MORE TROUBLE FROM WRONG-DOING.

THE following morning Alice awoke with a heavy feeling at her heart. Though she had slept soundly, the events of the previous day came to her mind the moment she was fairly awake, and her trouble had not grown one whit less.

'I will ask God to help me,' thought she; 'but will He help me if I do not confess my fault to Mr. Mordecai and mamma? I never, never could tell Mr. Mordecai, for his anger is so dreadful.'

'Then tell your dear mother,' whispered conscience.

'But I promised not to tell, so I must not,' was her answer.

In her inmost heart she was glad she had given such a promise, for would not her mother's grief and astonishment be as hard to bear as the wrath of the Jew? Yes; she was sure it would. Usually she rose soon after her mamma, for she loved to assist in preparing their morning

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meal; but on the morning of which we speak she dreaded to meet her mother face to face, and longed to sleep again that she might thus forget her burden. When trials had come before, it had been her comfort to cast them on the Lord; but this burden she was trying to bear alone, and oh how heavy it was for her weak frame! Why, ask you, could she not take this trial to God?

Because she was not willing to confess her sin. Conscience had warned her against wearing the jewellery which Nonie had so slyly taken from the shop, and she had done it in spite of the warning; and this unlooked-for punishment, conscience said, was just, but told her also, that when she was ready to confess her sin to her mother and the pawnbroker, relief would come. When breakfast was on the table, and no excuse remained for tarrying longer, the guilty child arose and tried to appear as usual; but her efforts were even more unsuccessful than on the previous evening. Mrs. Bent, concluding the child was not well, was even more indulgent than usual.

This kindness made poor Alice still more wretched than before, for she felt it to be wholly undeserved. After her morning tasks were finished, she begged to be allowed to go downstairs, saying she and Nonie would come up together when school time came. Mrs. Bent consented, and the little girl hurried away, longing, yet dreading, to meet her companions of the day before. Nonie was in the little back room playing with baby Jakie, and looking so happy and unconcerned that Alice was perfectly astonished, and ready to believe that the ring had been found, or that

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the matter had been forgotten by her friend. But Mrs. Streck went out to the shop, and then Nonie burst forth.

'I 'll tell you what it is, Alice,' said she, 'you must not be so sorry and pale; Hesed and I have been talking over the ring, and we think it will all come right. Small trinkets like that ring, the breastpin, and ear-rings, father keeps in that little chest under the counter, you know.'

Alice nodded a reply.

'Well, he never leaves the key with me when he goes out, but gives it to mother. Sunday night he handed it to her, and as we had been out she had on her Sabbath-day dress, and I saw her slip the key into the pocket. Yesterday morning I took it from there, and thus got the chest unlocked. I was glad enough, I can tell you, for I had wondered how I was to get hold of it. Last night I was just as lucky, for it had been left in the pocket all day. I had to mind the shop while the others took supper, so I had the chance to replace everything; wasn't that fine?' and Nonie's dark eyes sparkled merrily, as she thought of the success of her deceitful plan.

'It would be if the ring was in with the other things,' sighed Alice.

'Now, don't worry about that, for we think the ring wasn't worth much; and, best of all, father 'll never suspect us of taking it. Perhaps it won't be called for in six months, and I have known people to leave things and never call for them again.'

Nonie's hopefulness affected Alice somewhat; the

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latter did not feel quite so despairing when she knew her friend was cheerful, but she thought more and more of the wickedness of their doings. Though never forbidden to take things from the shop, it was because the possibility of such a thing had never entered the minds of their elders, and this she well knew; therefore they had been both disobedient and deceitful. Nonie's conscience was not so quick, and she felt that all would be well could suspicion be warded off.

While they were engaged in an earnest conversation on the subject, Mordecai entered, and jokingly asked what they had to talk about.

'Oh, many things, father,' replied Nonie, shrugging her shoulders, and giving Alice a sly wink.

The latter could not smile, for Mordecai's presence filled her with dread. She kept her face averted, and he did not see that it was pale, nor that the blue eyes were heavy and sad. As Mordecai was in a remarkably playful humour, he said, 'Come, Alice, you and Jakie cannot live apart; suppose you buy him of the mother and myself.'

'Oh, I never could get money enough to buy him!' So earnest was this reply, that the pawnbroker laughed outright.

'Then can't you live with us and be our little girl?' he asked.

He won't want me when he knows how naughty I am, thought Alice, and she answered rather sadly, 'You have a better little girl than I am, Mr. Mordecai.'

'Oh, you are good enough to suit me,' and the Jew

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playfully pinched Alice's cheek as he spoke, and then hurried away to the shop. Soon after Hesed came in, and all three children went upstairs together. The lessons were recited even better than usual, for the little pupils were grateful to their teacher for the yesterday's holiday. Before they were dismissed, Mrs. Bent took occasion to say she thought it would be better to defer their visit to Miss Grace until the following week, for two holidays so near together would not be beneficial to their little school.

'But, mamma, we promised to go this week,' said Alice.

'Never mind, a few words in explanation will make matters right.'

'Then when may we go?' asked Nonie.

'About Tuesday next,' replied Mrs. Bent.

Although somewhat disappointed, the children quietly acquiesced. In fact, they could do no less, for sour looks or cross words would not be likely to change this decision. The days passed by so quietly, that even Alice began to hope that very little trouble would come from the late accident. But wrong-doing will bring us into thorny paths, and, as some good man has said, 'the folly of to-day follows us.' This means the same as the Bible words: 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

On Monday, just one week from the time of the unfortunate occurrence, all three children were playing on the walk near the shop, when Nonie espied the lady approaching to whom belonged the ring. She quickly communicated the fact to her brother and friend.

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'What shall we do?' asked Alice in a despairing tone.

'I will tell *you* what to do,' replied Nonie; 'you and Hesed go and stay in the shop while the lady is there.'

'Please come with us, Nonie'; and Alice held out her hands imploringly as she spoke.

'I can't. Don't you see, father would ask me if I ever opened the chest? You wouldn't have me tell a lie, would you?'

'No, indeed, I wouldn't,' replied Alice; still it was with a pale face and trembling limbs she followed Hesed when he entered the door.

'Well, Mr. Streck,' said the lady, 'I have come for my ring; I hope it's all safe.'

'Oh, yes, it's safe enough; I take right good care of such valuables,' replied Mordecai, with tone and manner that plainly said he had full confidence in his own ability, and was sure he could care for anything entrusted to him. 'But,' he added, as he slowly unlocked the little chest, 'it seems to me you have soon come to redeem it.'

'Yes; I had an unexpected supply of money, and so am enabled to redeem it quickly.'

'Was the ring in a box?' asked the pawnbroker, as he looked carefully among the trinkets in the chest without espying it.

'No; don't you remember wrapping it in a bit of paper?'

'Oh, yes; but I must have laid it in the window, for it is not here'; and Mordecai relocked the chest and proceeded to the window, where he searched diligently for

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'AH, MINE HANNAH,' SAID HER HUSBAND, 'HERE'S SHAME FOR US! A LADY LEFT A VALUABLE RING; TO-DAY SHE COMES FOR IT, AND IT IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND,' &c.—*See page 65.*

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the missing article. The search was unsuccessful, of course.

'It 's strange,' he murmured, 'that my memory thus fails me.' Then he added, in a louder tone, 'Mrs. Redman, I cannot find the ring, but I am sure it is in the shop; can't you send or come for it to-morrow?'

As the lady had before dealt with Mordecai and found him honest, she cheerfully consented to his proposal.

As soon as the latter left the shop the children started for the door, but were stopped by Mordecai, who said they must help him look for the ring, or, at least, Hesed must.

'Call the mother,' said he to the latter. The order was quickly obeyed, and Mrs. Streck came from the back room with the baby on her arms.

'Ah, mine Hannah,' said her husband, 'here 's shame for us! A lady left a valuable ring; to-day she comes for it, and it is nowhere to be found. It is worth a good many pounds, and its loss would take the bread from the children's mouths. Ah, me! ah, me! We are undone!'

Mordecai wrung his hands, and looked the very picture of despairing grief. But suddenly it occurred to him, that he should send for his wife to ask her an important question.

'Did you or Nonie unlock the small chest on Monday of last week while I was absent?' inquired he.

'Oh, no, no; our Nonie did not know where the key was, for I left it in my Sabbath-dress pocket all day long, and we had no call to use it. But,' continued Mrs. Streck, 'the ring cannot be lost; let us move all the things in the

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shop, and we will surely find it. Here's Alice ready to give us all the aid she can.' And she looked with a loving smile at the poor little child, whose heart was ready to break with guilt, grief, and fear.

Nonie was called in, and she amused Jakie while the others moved all the articles, small and great, that the shop contained. The pawnbroker and his wife searched diligently for the lost jewel, while Hesed and Alice pretended to be as eager, the latter feeling as if she was acting a dreadful lie, but not daring to do otherwise.

When the unsuccessful search was concluded, Mrs. Streck, not willing to give up the matter, said, 'You are wiser than I am, Mordecai, but there are great cracks in this floor, and I am thinking the ring has fallen through; can't the boards be lifted?'

'Yes, it shall be done on the morrow,' replied the mournful husband, who felt that no sorrow could equal his own.

Poor Alice! the tears rolled down her cheeks in spite of her efforts at composure. This the kind wife noticed, and she took the child by her little trembling hand and led her into the other room, where, both by acts and words, she tried to comfort her.

'Why, little Alice mnstn't cry,' said she; ''tis true enough, my good Mordecai feels bad, but to-morrow we will take up one or two boards from the floor, and then some of the bright yonng eyes will spy the ring, and some of the small white fingers will pick it up. Come, wash the blue eyes; the mother mustn't see them running over with

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tears'; and the good woman drew the child toward the stand, where a bowl of water stood waiting to be used.

Alice silently bathed her face, and by a strong effort drove away the tears.

'There, that 's right!' exclaimed Mrs. Streck, who had closely watched her proceedings. 'Now, go away to mother,' she continued, slipping a couple of sweet cakes into Alice's hand as she spoke.

Slowly the poor child ascended the stairs. 'I cannot keep the secret long,' said she to herself. 'It 's too dreadful to bear. But oh! how angry Mr. Mordecai will be, when he knows I lost the ring! Nonie says I mustn't tell, because her father will fearfully beat Hesed and herself. Well, I 'll try a little longer, but it seems to me my heart will break,' and one chubby hand was pressed upon her side for a moment. Mrs. Bent, noticing her sad face as she entered the room, asked, 'What has grieved my little girl?'

'O mamma, Mr. Mordecai has lost a ring that 's worth ever so much money; we can't find it at all, and I am afraid we never shall. Isn't it dreadful? It will take the bread out of the children's mouths; Mr. Mordecai said it would. Oh, dear me!'

'Why, things are not so bad as all that,' was the cheerful reply. 'But do you know, my love, that to-morrow is the day of your anticipated visit?' asked Mrs. Bent, by way of diversion.

'Yes, mamma; but I don't care to go,' was the indifferent reply.

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'Don't care to go! Yes, you do, especially as Nonie and Hesed are going,' said Mrs. Bent cheerfully.

Just at this moment there was a low knock on the door, which Alice immediately opened to admit the little Jew wife, who came with Jakie in her arms. Scarcely was the latter seated, ere she commenced.

'O Mrs. Bent!' said she, 'misfortune has walked in at the door, and I am afraid she means to abide with us.'

The troubled woman then told of the loss, and of the search in the shop.

'To-morrow,' said she, 'my good Mordecai will lift some of the shop floor, and if he finds not the ring he may be one little bit cross, so I am thinking. The children shall go away in the morning, for if they wait till afternoon their good father may say no. Can you spare your small girl, Mrs. Bent?' and she gave Alice a playful slap on the shoulder, as she asked this question.

Mrs. Bent readily consented to her neighbour's proposal, and the three children started quite early in the morning, two of them merry as could be, and the other carrying a heavier burden than she had ever before known. Oh the weight of a burdened conscience! It can only be known to one who bears it. Alice could have told you how sore a thing it was to carry. But He, who was bruised for our iniquities, can and will take the load, if we do but ask Him.

As the weather was pleasant, they walked to Dr. Doty's house, Nonie and Hesed beguiling the way by pleasant conversation, and Alice finding it long and tedious

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because of her troubled heart. When they arrived at the house, they were warmly welcomed. Miss Grace loved children, and she longed to bring them to Christ. She hoped to be of use to the little ones who had been taught to despise the Saviour, therefore she was doubly glad to see her visitors. Nonie had told Hesed of the city with the golden streets, and the latter declared it could not be heaven, for they did nothing there but sing: he would question the sick lady, that he would. Hesed was not troubled with bashfulness, and as soon as the first greetings were over, he broached the subject which had so attracted him.

'Look here,' said he, as he edged up close to Miss Grace's couch; 'does your Father really live in a city where the streets are paved with gold?'

'Yes, my boy; don't you know the name of that city?'

'Well, Nonie says it's heaven; but that can't be, for Gentile people will not get in there; besides that, I don't believe there 's any gold in heaven. Then, another thing, Alice and Nonie think you may have wings like an angel; if you have, don't you believe you could fly around this room?' and the boy looked up at the ceiling, as if he would measure its height.

So amusing were his words and manner, that Miss Grace burst into a merry laugh, but soon checking herself, she said, 'Oh no, little Hesed, I have no wings—that's a mistake; but I have a mansion prepared for me, and a Father in the city where the golden streets are.'

She then proceeded to speak of Jesus, of His love for

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children, and of the home He has prepared for those who love Him.

After the talk was concluded, Alice proposed that they should have a swing. This proposal met with hearty approval, and the three were soon in the barn, where the swing hung. Even Alice almost forgot her trouble for a time, so great was the enjoyment of the hour. In the meantime Miss Doty and Grace held a conversation in the room of the latter, which concerned Alice very closely.

'Did you notice how pale and sad she looked?' asked Grace.

'Yes, indeed. She is generally so bright and happy,' replied the sister.

'I am sure there is something wrong with the child; she is either sick or troubled about something,' said Grace. 'I want to keep her with us until to-morrow; don't you think we might?'

'Yes, if she will stay. We can send a word in explanation to her mother, so I guess that will be all right.'

When the children returned to the house, Alice was asked if she would stay until next morning, and she, well pleased with the idea, answered in the affirmative. The day passed quickly and pleasantly away, and after an early tea Nonie and Hesed took their departure. Miss Grace would not have detained Alice without Mrs. Bent's permission, had she not, with that lady's consent, kept the child before. And she was anxious to know what the little one's trouble was, whether it was real or imaginary. Alice at any other time would have been delighted to sleep with her dear

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Miss Grace, but now the darkness and the night made her trials seem like a mountain in size. After retiring, she tossed and rolled so restlessly that Grace ventured to ask, in tender tones, why she did so.

'Oh! I wish I had gone home with Nonie,' moaned the child; 'my heart hurts me so; it seems as if I should die.'

'Why does your heart hurt, darling? are you sick?'

'No—I guess not.'

'Then what is the matter? can't you tell me?'

'O Miss Grace, I have such a dreadful trouble just now!'

'Well, don't you know that God has said, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee"?'

'Yes, I know; but this is something God won't help me to bear.'

'Then it must be, indeed, a terrible trouble, little girl; for when God will not help us with our burdens, they are greater than we can carry; but I cannot believe you have any trial but that the Lord will help you to bear it. Can you tell me what it is that worries you so much?'

'O Miss Grace!' sobbed Alice, 'I do want to tell you, but I am afraid you will never love me again, and it 's all so dreadful that, may be, you are too sick to hear it.'

Grace drew the sobbing child so close that the curly head lay upon her breast, and then softly whispered, 'Now tell me, my dear; perhaps I can help you; who knows?'

Thus solicited, Alice, in faltering tones, told of the losing of the ring, and of all her guilt and fears.

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'I am sorry for you, little one; it is, indeed, a sore trial, and you have committed a grievous error; but God will aid you if you will do right.'

'What shall I do?' asked Alice, dreading to hear what she was sure her friend would say.

'Confess your fault to Mr. Streck and your mother,' was the answer.

'How can I, Miss Grace? Mr. Mordecai will be so angry, and mamma so sorry! Besides that, I promised the others not to tell. Nonie says the father will fearfully beat them, and she 's afraid they will die.'

'That is nonsense, and worse; it is a lie, for Nonie knows her father will not do anything to endanger the lives of his children. But have those children no conscience? are you the only one who is concerned about it?'

'They don't seem to care very much; they are only afraid of being found out. But I have been so wicked; it seems to me God will not forgive me.'

'God is ready to pardon you now, darling. Go bravely home, determined to do your duty; pray earnestly, and I will pray for you; and this trial, which now seems so great, will dwindle into nothing, or God will give you such strength to bear it, that you will be able to trust to His guidance, and believe that He will bring light out of darkness. If,' continued Miss Grace, 'you refuse to confess your fault, it will be brought out in some other way; for "be sure your sin will find you out." But "he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy."'

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'I will tell all to-morrow; truly I will!' exclaimed Alice in a determined tone.

'That 's right, my dear.'

These words, and the loving kiss accompanying them, made the child's resolution still stronger, and she felt some relief when it was formed. Her sleep was sweeter, and, on awaking, she felt less of that weary heart-ache that had lately so troubled her. At breakfast, the good doctor said he was going right through the street in which Mrs. Bent lived; therefore he would take the little girl home in his carriage. Alice's eyes sparkled when she heard this; it was a pleasure wholly unexpected, and it was delightful to think of having a carriage ride, and with Dr. Doty, who to her was almost a miracle of wisdom and goodness. Quite early in the morning they started, and were only a short distance on their road when the doctor, taking his companion's little hand in his own, said, 'What ails this tiny girl? where are her roses gone? and why is she so sad?'

'I 'm afraid Miss Grace is going to die,' was the reply; and this was true enough, for Alice fancied her invalid friend was weaker than when she last visited her. This answer was unexpected, and a great spasm of pain passed over the physician's face, as he said, 'Miss Grace! Oh, I hope not! God knows we could not spare her!'

The looking for this sad event was the one dark shadow in the doctor's beautiful home. Grace was so lovely, both in person and mind, that it seemed impossible to part with her; but the father's professional skill told

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him all too surely that the parting must come, and probably very soon; therefore Alice's words caused him more pain than she could know.

'Why do you think this, dear?' asked he.

'Because she looked and acted sicker than when I saw her before.'

'Probably she is,' said the other, more to himself than to his companion; then added, in a louder tone: 'Well, well, we won't talk about her dying, at any rate. Something else troubles you, daughter; what is it?'

'Dr. Doty, I can't tell you, I 'm sure I can't; but ask dear Miss Grace, I told her all about it.'

'Never mind, you can tell Jesus all about it too; He will help you,' said the kind physician, as he looked with pitying eyes upon the tearful child at his side.

Very soon, it seemed to Alice, her home was reached —almost too soon, she thought. Hesed stood upon the walk ready to welcome her when she alighted from the carriage, and was rather demonstrative in his greeting.

'O Alice,' he cried, 'I 'm glad you 've come! I have lots of things to tell you.'

'What things?' asked the other.

The boy, lowering his tone, told that a carpenter had taken up the whole of the shop floor, and, of course, found nothing; the day previous the lady had come again for the ring, and went off very angry because it could not be be found; and lastly, that the father was so vexed that even the mother scarcely dared speak to him.

'Mother says,' continued the child, 'that the father is

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sick from grief, but I say he is only *cross*, that's all. Heigh! wouldn't he hop if he knew we had anything to do with it? ha, ha!'

Our little girl's heart sank as she listened to her companion's recital; it seemed now almost impossible to carry out the resolution she had formed; but was not her word pledged? and was not God ready to help her to do right?

'Where is your father, Hesed?' asked she in a low tone.

'Oh! he's in the shop leaning his head on the counter, and ready to growl, like one of those lions in the show, if any one happens to speak to him. Fudge! great fuss to make over one ring, I think.'

'Why, Hesed Streck, you ought to be ashamed to speak so about your own father! especially as you know how the ring was lost. Mr. Mordecai said it would take the bread out of the children's mouths; you're one of his children, and you might starve, who knows?'

'Humph! I don't think there is much danger of it. Why, ah, the father has a pile of money in the bank, and that's as good as bread any day. I have heard him speak like that before; he doesn't mean it.'

'Very well, I'm going to tell him that I lost the ring.' These words were said firmly, but the little pale face showed plainly what they cost the speaker.

'Alice Bent, are you crazy?' asked Hesed in alarm. 'You must not, shall not tell!' and he caught hold of his companion's dress, as she started for the door.

This did not prevent her, however, for she broke from

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his detaining grasp and hurried into the shop. Here sat Mordecai in a dejected attitude, sure enough. Raising his head as the poor little penitent entered, and seeing who his visitor was, he spoke almost kindly, fancying her look of sorrow and pain came from sympathy with his heavy loss.

'Well-a-day! these are sad days, child,' said he: 'no ring yet.'

'No, Mr. Mordecai; and I should have saved you taking up this floor, for I lost the ring.'

For one moment the pawnbroker was silent, and then, in a voice that trembled with passion, he asked what she meant. 'Explain yourself!' he cried.

Alice, with surprising calmness, told her woeful story, only keeping back the fact of Bennie being with them, for Mordecai was no friend to the boy. Gladly would she have screened the others from blame, but she could not do so. She had not half estimated the Jew's wrath. He fairly stamped with rage, and would have laid hold of her with no gentle hand, had not the counter stood between them; not that this was an insurmountable barrier, but it served to check the angry man. She was the chief object of his wrath; his own children would have never touched what did not belong to them, had they not been allowed to play with a wretched Gentile, who thus abused his kindness.

'Mrs. Bent shall leave our rooms this day!' he cried; 'I want no more intercourse with such people. Talk of religion! And is this what your religion has taught you? Pooh for such people!'

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All this was hard; but when dear little Mrs. Streck came in, and learned from her husband's excited language just how the matter stood, and turning a grieved face towards the small culprit, said, 'Oh! how could you do so? I would never have thought it of you!' Alice rushed from the shop in an agony of grief, and in this state reached her mother, who was fairly struck with surprise to see her thus enter.

'Why, love,' she cried, 'what is the matter? Is Miss Grace dead?'

'No, no, mamma! something worse than that'; and the excited little girl threw herself upon the floor and sobbed and wept uncontrollably for a few moments, but gradually grew calmer, and let her anxious mother into the dreadful secret.

Even Mrs. Bent was at first angry, and spoke sternly to the excited child. 'You naughty girl!' she exclaimed; 'you are most to blame of the three, for you have had better teaching than those children.'

'O mamma, mamma! whip me, punish me in any way you choose; it cannot be worse than the past week's sufferings. Oh dear! oh dear! it's all so dreadful; it seems to me it will kill me,' was the sobbing answer.

'I shall not punish you at all, daughter, but I fear your punishment will be of the severest kind,' replied Mrs. Bent beginning to relent a little. 'But,' continued she, 'this is why you have been so pale and listless during the last few days, is it? Well, I do not wonder at that, but I am surprised beyond measure at your deceit; I can scarcely

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forgive you'; and her face grew stern again as she spoke.

The guilty little girl still lay upon the floor, her face covered with her hands, and her whole frame trembling with agitation. 'Miss Grace said if I would confess all I would feel better, and matters would come right; but this is worse than all the rest. Mamma, don't you think you could forgive me if you tried?' she faltered forth.

So humble and beseeching was her voice that Mrs. Bent's anger vanished before it, and, stooping to the floor, she tenderly lifted the weeping child and sat down in a low rocker with her in her arms. The poor tired head felt better as soon as it could rest upon the mother's breast; and as the latter asked questions concerning the visit to Miss Grace and thus diverted the little sufferer's mind, the sobs grew less frequent, and after a time ceased entirely.

When this was the case Mrs. Bent led her into the bedroom and bade her lie down for a while, saying that quietness and rest would make a change in her feelings. Alice did not object, for what with the suspense of the past week and the excitement of the morning, she was completely exhausted.

'We will let lessons go by for to-day,' said the mother, after the room was darkened and she was about to leave her little daughter alone. This was in rather a sad tone, for she was sure the little school was broken up, and it had been so pleasant for them all. The widow went back to her work troubled and disheartened. Knowing that the

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pawnbroker was grasping and hard in his nature, she feared for the consequences of the accident. He very likely would consider it only right for her to pay all that was demanded for the ring, since her child had lost it, and she could ill bear such an expense. Then, probably, he would wish them to leave his dwelling; and though he could not force them to do so, as the rooms were hired for a year, still it would be extremely unpleasant to remain against his desire.

Even the breaking up of the school would take from her earnings; and, poor Alice! how lonely would her studies be now!

But the saddest of all the consequences, as far as could be seen, was the reproach this would cast on the religion of Jesus. The Jew would say her child had led the others, and it had been from the corrupt teaching she had received. One thought, however, had a very cheering effect upon Mrs. Bent; she had faithfully tried to sow the good seed, or, in other words, had tried, both by precept and example, to recommend the religion she professed. And God, who is faithful to His promises, had said, 'Ye shall reap, if ye faint not.'

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESTRANGEMENT.

WHILE Mrs. Bent sat thus in dejection, with sewing in hand, there was a low rap on the door, which was immediately followed by the entrance of Mrs. Streck, whose whole face showed suffering and perplexity.

'Good morning, Mrs. Bent,' said she in a cool, constrained manner, wholly unlike her usual warm and affectionate one.

She felt no anger toward Mrs. Bent, but had not her good husband said that the widow was to blame? and she never questioned when Mordecai spoke. For this reason she felt compelled to act coolly.

'My good husband is almost sick,' continued she, 'with this troublesome affair, and he wished me to come and talk it over with you. He will let the children come no more to the little school, neither will he allow them to talk or play with Alice, for has she not corrupted their minds? He wishes me not to visit your rooms, neither are you to enter ours, Mrs. Bent. But, after all, my good Mordecai is very kind, for he might bring an officer to search your rooms;

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but he says he will not thus trouble you, for he is sure you know nothing of the ring. He also wants you not to move, for it would be extremely unpleasant this winter weather.'

The Jew's wife did not repeat all the pawnbroker had said on the last named subject. He had, in his passion, declared that the widow should leave the premises without delay; but a little consideration showed him that this might be a loss, as the rooms would probably stand empty until spring; and then there was a chance of getting a tenant who would defraud them of their rent, which now was always punctually paid.

'If,' said he, 'we should lose our rent, mine Hannah, the children would go hungry indeed. Sometimes I have thought Misfortune should never enter our door, though she knocked ever so loudly; but she has boldly crossed the threshold, well-a-day! well-a-day!' and the Jew stroked his bushy beard with an air of despondency, which was almost ridiculous to see.

But let us go back to the widow and Mrs. Streck. Mrs. Bent replied to the latter's remarks quietly and kindly; said she entertained none but kindly feelings towards her neighbours, regretted the loss, and the trouble which had sprung from it, more than she could express, and also that she would endeavour to comply with Mordecai's wishes.

'Where is the poor little girl, Alice?' asked Mrs. Streck, who could not thus quickly lose all interest in the child she had learned to love so dearly.

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'The child was so exhausted with sorrow and weeping that I induced her to lie down for a while. This is a sore trial for her, Mrs. Streck.'

'Oh yes, I know'; and the tears rolled down the Jew wife's cheeks as she added sadly, 'my poor Nonie and Hesed, the good father is going to fearfully punish them. I ventured to say no, but Mordecai knows best, I suppose'; and the sigh with which these words were accompanied came from the little woman's inmost heart. But she wiped the tears away with the corner of her apron, and spoke coolly again as she said: 'Mordecai thinks you should pay for the ring, as Alice lost it, but he is so kind he will only require half of its price from you. I 'm a fortunate woman, Mrs. Bent, to possess such a worthy husband, and you may be very grateful that you have fallen into such hands, for what other man would deal so kindly with you?'

The widow with an effort suppressed a smile, when she heard such praises heaped upon one who so ill deserved them, and thanked the simple woman for the wonderful thoughtfulness of her husband. Soon after, the visitor took her departure, leaving her neighbour less despondent than when she entered; for now the trouble did not seem so great when the suspense was past.

We left Alice lying upon her bed, and will return to her.

At first it seemed impossible to regain any degree of composure, but presently a sweet calmness stole over her. She had done the duty which was more difficult to perform than any she had ever undertaken, and now she could look

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up trustingly for help; no longer fearing to ask God to forgive her sins and take her burden. She had always loved to read the story of Daniel and the lions, and that story was a great comfort to her. God could as truly send His angel to shut Mordecai's mouth, and give him a kindly feeling toward her, so that the dreadful angry words she feared would not burst forth, as He could shut the mouths of lions when Daniel, His servant, lay among them. And though she could not say, as that holy man did, that innocency was found in him, for her own wrong-doing had brought the trouble upon her, she could claim a promise of which Daniel never heard, and that was, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' And she also joyfully remembered the text Miss Grace repeated for her benefit: 'He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have *mercy*.'

Presently Daniel, the lions, and the promises all seemed mingled together, and then they were all forgotten, for Alice was in a sound sleep and knew nothing further, till she found her mother bending over the bed and trying to make her comprehend that it was their hour for dinner, and that the meal was on the table. She quickly rose, feeling much refreshed from her nap, and mother and child sat down together to a comfortable repast, the latter eating with keener relish than for a week past.

After the dinner was concluded, Mrs. Bent told her little daughter of the Jew wife's call, and of all that passed

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in the interview between them. She kept back nothing, feeling it was better to let the child know what her naughtiness had cost. Alice shed sad tears when she heard of the breaking up of the little school, that her dear mother must pay in part for the ring, and that Nonie was forbidden to play with or even speak to her, when she loved her so dearly. It never occurred to her that either Nonie or Hesed would cherish anger toward her. 'Miss Grace said it would all come right,' thought she, as she lifted up a prayer to the Lord for help; 'and I know it will.'

Well was it for the child that she could not see all the petty annoyances to which, for a while, she would be subjected; she would have sunk with discouragement had this been the case.

We can almost always bear trouble better when it is fully upon us, than when we look ahead and see it in anticipation. Our anticipated trials, which often do not come, we feel to be heavier than our real ones.

It is not said, My grace *will be* sufficient for thee, but '*is* sufficient.' Methinks this is to show us that the grace needed is always for the present, for the burdens and temptations of *to-day;* and we know our God will give grace to help in every hour of need. During that whole day, Mrs. Bent required no tasks of Alice, for the child's mind was already fully occupied. The afternoon passed quietly, and rather pleasantly; still the little girl felt lonely without her usual companions.

Early in the evening, owing to this feeling, she drew her little rocker close to her mother's side, and,

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laying her head in that dear mother's lap, begged for a story.

'What shall the story be about, wee one?' asked Mrs. Bent, as she gently stroked the thick brown curls that covered the head upon her knee.

'Oh, anything, mamma; though I like best to hear about little girls like myself.'

'Very well; I will tell you a story which I heard from the lips of a good man, who related it in a Sunday-school room where I was present:

'Poor little Nellie B—— roamed the streets from day to day, trying thus to gain food for herself and money for her drunken mother. She did not beg from choice, but had no other way to sustain herself; and had she ever refused to do so, her drunken mother would have furiously beaten her. One day Nellie, ragged, dirty, and discouraged, was plodding along her weary way, when she saw a beautifully dressed lady approaching; and being on the alert, as usual, stretched forth her hand, and uttered her plaintive plea: "Please, lady, give me a penny, I 'm so hungry; have had nothing to eat to-day." When the lady reached her she stopped, and looked with pitying eyes upon her.

'"Little one, did you ever hear of Jesus?" she asked in a sad tone.

'"No, ma'am; I think not," answered the child doubtfully.

'"Well, did you ever go to Sunday-school?"

'"Oh no, indeed!"

'"Would you like to go?"

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'"Yes, ma'am; but I could not go in these clothes"; and the child looked sadly down at her ragged garments, as she gave this reply.

'Miss Lee, for this was the lady's name, told Nellie that if she could gain her mother's consent in the matter of the school, and could come to her home before the next Sabbath, she would provide her with a suit of respectable clothing. She then gave the poor child her name and address, and went on her way. Nellie was filled with joyful anticipations, for she imagined at the school she would be treated to all sorts of goodies, such as fruit, confectionery, cakes, and nuts. The drunken mother readily consented to the plan; therefore our poor little ignorant street girl went to the school, not to get food for the body, but, what is far better, food for the immortal soul. For several successive Sabbaths she was permitted to enjoy the singing and sweet stories, which to her were as new as to our Nonie and Hesed, Alice. But soon the drunken, debased mother, craving for drink, sold the clothes the teacher had provided. This was a sore trial to Nellie, but as soon as Miss Lee heard of it another suit was prepared. Even this kind lady was discouraged, however, when this followed the first one. Rum has swallowed up many scores of such raiment, besides houses, lands, and happiness. The matter caused the teacher to think of the wretchedness of that mother, who could thus rob her child.

'Could not something be done for the poor creature? After prayerful consideration, Miss Lee resolved to try. In the meantime, Nellie was once more dressed for Sunday-

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school, and took her accustomed place there. The little girl was beginning to love Jesus, and oh how she loved to sing the beautiful sacred songs learned at the school! And Nellie could sing; her voice was birdlike in its music. One Sabbath afternoon, when Miss Lee sat before her class, striving to impart instruction that would last through eternity, she suddenly paused, and turning to Nellie, who was always an attentive listener, asked—

'"Will you do something for me, Nellie?"

'The bright eyes were raised, the answer was ardent and earnest enough:—

'"Ah, teacher, I would do anything for you."

'"Well, Nellie, the next time mother comes home drunk, you start and sing, 'I want to be like Jesus.'"

'This time the dark eyes filled with tears, and the answer was sad and faltering:—

'"Ah, teacher, I would do anything for you, but I can't do that!"

'"And why not?" asked Miss Lee in surprise.

'"Because mother hates me when I sing, teacher"; and rolling up her sleeve the child showed a little arm all bruised and blackened.

'Miss Lee was silent for a few moments; in fact she was perplexed, for by her pupil's singing she had hoped to reach the debased woman's heart. It did not take her long, however, to decide, and turning once more to the child, she asked, "Can't you take one beating for me, Nellie?"

'This time the earnest eyes fell, and the little face looked troubled for a moment; but soon the cloud lifted,

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the tears were chased away, and Nellie answered clearly and distinctly, "Yes, teacher, I 'll take one beating for you."

'The child, strong in her resolution, went to the poor room she called home. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday the mother came in sober: but on Thursday, Nellie felt the chills creep over her as she heard the staggering steps, which proclaimed too surely that the time to fulfil the promise had come. As the unsteady steps came slowly up the stairs, the child commenced the song. At first trembling and low was the voice, but soon it cleared, and the beautiful music and words reached the drunkard's ears. On and on, up to the landing, laboured the intoxicated woman; and when all the steps were mounted, steadying herself, she stood to listen. As soon as the last words were finished she cried out, in the thick utterance peculiar to drunkenness, "Sing it again, Nellie!"

'Again the music rang out sweet and clear, and again, when it was finished, the drunken woman cried, "Sing it again, Nellie!" but before the second verse was reached, the poor, wicked mother burst into the room, and throwing her arms around her child, said, "O Nellie, pray to God to make me like you!" Child and mother knelt together, and Nellie prayed that God would make her mother like Jesus, not like her little sinful daughter.

'"And," said the speaker, "prayer was answered, and to this day Nellie and her mother go hand in hand to Sunday-school."'

Alice was well pleased with the story, and would gladly

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have heard more; but Mrs. Bent led her away to bed, saying she must take plenty of rest, that she might be prepared for work and study on the morrow. The child sighed as she thought of the loneliness of her studies, but tried to believe it could not last long.

Quite early on the following morning she arose, and her mother listened with pleasure to the hymn she sung while dressing. So unburdened was her heart and conscience, that she sang from pure joyfulness. After breakfast was over, Alice went out for a short walk, and the first person she met in the street was Hesed, whom she would gladly have greeted, had not the latter prevented her by his hostile movements: 'Halloo, Miss Blabber, tattler, tell-tale, do you feel better, a great deal better, since you brought us all into trouble?' cried he tauntingly. 'I'll pay you for my share!' he added, as he caught up a handful of the light snow, which had fallen through the night, and threw it in her face. Alice was angry, very angry, but she wiped away the snow in silence, and quietly resumed her walk.

When she returned to the house, Hesed was nowhere to be seen; and, quite relieved, she stepped up the low step, not perceiving a string fastened across the doorway, till it had tripped her up and caused her to fall flat upon her face. Hesed's chuckle of delight from his hiding-place under the stairs disclosed the author of this mischief; and, though Alice was not hurt, she was vexed, mortified, and grieved.

She had expected both Nonie and Hesed to lament with

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her over the commands laid upon them; but it was plain to be seen that the latter, at least, meant to make her suffer for her confession. And this was only the commencement of the annoyances to which she was subjected. Though Hesed seemed the most openly hostile, Nonie never noticed her, except by a derisive laugh, or by a sneer of contempt.

Very frequently Bennie Shafer came to visit his Jewish friends; and Hesed lost no time in acquainting him with the part Alice had taken, and he too, joined in the plans formed against her. Sometimes she was pelted with pebbles; not unfrequently she was surprised by a quantity of cold water dashed upon her; and very often she was annoyed by Bennie's dog, an ugly brute, which had always been a terror to her. Sometimes she was frightened by Bennie or Hesed jumping out suddenly upon her from some place, where she had no thought of finding them; and once, when she was out after nightfall, a great white figure issued from the shop and closely followed her. This almost terrified the poor child. She dared not go on to the shop where her mamma had sent her, for the dreadful creature almost walked upon her heels; neither did she dare turn back and face the monster; it made her shudder to think of being touched by it. But at length, when it reached out one of its long arms and gave her hair a twinge, she could bear no more, and suddenly wheeling round, ran with all her might toward home. But oh, horror of horrors! the ghostlike creature ran too, and with no slow steps. She had no thought of anything now but how to escape,

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and in her fright tripped on a stone and fell headlong upon the pavement. She thought surely she was in the power of the monster now; but it did not stop to grasp her, as she expected, but with one bound cleared her prostrate body and disappeared within the shop.

Alice was not seriously injured, but presented rather a sorry spectacle when she entered her mother's presence, having both a bleeding nose and a bruised forehead. Of course Mrs. Bent demanded an explanation, which the little girl endeavoured to give. She had not before complained of the grievances heaped upon her, for she had thought mamma had enough to bear without this.

This surely could not be Nonie or Hesed, for it was a tall figure and completely clad in white. There was something mysterious to the child about the matter, and in spite of all Mrs. Bent could say to the contrary, she was sure it was a great monster, and she had been fortunate indeed to escape from its clutches. The mother, not knowing all that had passed before, thought it best to say nothing of the matter, hoping it would not be repeated.

But all that I have above related was of small moment in comparison with what followed; at least so thought Alice, who surely knew what most closely concerned her. The little girl was the owner of a pet cat which bore the name of Gipsy, a beautiful Maltese, which had been given her by dear Miss Grace. Alice's love for this creature was very observable; she would amuse herself by the hour playing with it, and sometimes told mamma now that Nonie and Hesed were angry, Gipsy was her only playmate.

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Suddenly, however, the animal disappeared and could not be found, although the little owner looked high and low, in all likely and many unlikely places, with the vain hope of finding it; neither searching nor calling brought pet Gipsy back. All this was dreadful; but on the third day the suspense was ended, for Alice stumbled over its dead body as it lay on the door mat. It was plain to be seen that the cat had been maliciously killed, and brought to the door so that she might see it and be grieved.

'O mamma, mamma!' sobbed the grief-stricken girl, 'I can't bear it; do let us go right away from here.'

Mrs. Bent spoke soothingly in reply, and did what she could to comfort the distressed child; and on that very day, when it seemed to the latter that she needed something special to cheer her, they had a visit from Dr. Doty, who had never visited them before, except professionally.

Grace had sent him. He said she wished to hear from Mrs. Bent, and from her little favourite. She had told him of Alice's trouble, and they both wished to know further concerning it. The good physician spent two pleasant hours with them, and smiled in an amused way as he said, 'Grace would not be pleased, if I shortened my visit.'

'And how is your sick daughter, doctor?' asked Mrs. Bent, with an air of interest which was far from being assumed.

'Very poorly in body, Mrs. Bent,' replied the other; and again Alice noticed the shade upon his brow.

'I am afraid we cannot keep her long,' continued he

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'She was much amused at the children's idea of her being in possession of a pair of hidden wings, but it did not cause me one moment's surprise; for daily she grows more like an angel, and I almost think myself she has a pair of wings, which will suddenly unfold and bear her away from us all. And, then, what enhances this idea is her appearance; for almost hourly her beauty increases, and is of that type which seems too pure for earth. But now, Mrs. Bent,' added the doctor, 'let me hear of your trouble, brought about by three naughty children, eh, Alice?' turning a sly glance upon the latter, which was meant for pleasantry, but the words and look caused the child's face to glow with shame.

The widow explained how matters stood, and ended by telling of Alice's loss and the grief attending it.

'Never mind, little one,' said the kind gentleman, 'old Maltie has a fine litter of kittens now, and you shall have your choice among them; and this reminds me of something else that will please you. Grace said I must bring you home in the carriage with me, that is, with mamma's consent, and return you again to-morrow; how will that suit?' and then, without waiting for an answer, he added, 'pretty well, I guess, by the sparkle of those blue eyes. Mamma is smiling her permission, which is a great relief to me, as I wish to be Grace's obedient servant.'

Alice was soon ready to accompany her friend, and the latter, as he arose to take his departure, took from his pocket an envelope, which he handed to Mrs. Bent, with the simple remark, 'Grace wished me to give you this.'

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After her visitor left the house, the widow examined the gift, and shed tears when she found in her possession the full value of the ring in banknotes.

The doctor and Grace had obtained a pretty correct idea of this matter from Alice's own words. Alice enjoyed her visit finely, and returned the following day, bringing with her a kitten, which was almost as beautiful as her lamented Gipsy; and she thought, in time, she could love it as well. This cat would doubtless have shared the fate of the other, had not something occurred that completely vanquished the angry and revengeful feelings of the Jewish children. It was only a few days after Alice's visit, that she noticed from the window a light carriage drive up in front of the shop, which she judged was a physician's, especially as one gentleman alighted from the vehicle and hurried into the house.

'Mamma,' said she, as she turned from the window, 'I think some one must be sick downstairs.'

'That may be,' replied Mrs. Bent; 'but we are not permitted to know any more about our neighbours' affairs than if they were strangers.'

'And it 's all my fault, isn't it, mamma?'

'No, not all your fault, my dear; but I sincerely hope the matter will make you more careful for the future. My own darling, I had trusted that we should see these Jews a converted family; just think of their despising the precious Saviour.'

'O mamma, I know it 's dreadful, and I am so sorry for it all, and often I pray to God to bring peace back

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again; and He will, I know He will, because He says, "'Ask, and ye shall receive."'

Mrs. Bent was cheered by her little daughter's faith; should she not also trust God to dispel the clouds in His own good time?

Soon after this conversation Alice had occasion to descend the stairs, and was surprised to meet Nonie face to face in the hall. The former was about to pass on without speaking, but Nonie, catching hold of her dress to detain her, said, in an imploring voice, 'O Alice, do stop! I must say something to you.'

The other was ready enough to listen if her companion's intentions were friendly, and this she could not doubt, as she looked at the sad and tearful face before her.

'Jakie, dear little baby brother, is very sick,' said Nonie, 'and the doctor thinks he may die. O Alice, it seems to me I can't bear it! The father would beat me if he knew I spoke to you,' she continued; 'but if it saves the baby he will be very glad, I know. This is why I stopped you; your mother told us about Jesus curing sick people. She said He would go right into the sickroom and make them well, and even walked in where a little girl about as big as me lay dead and raised her to life again. This made me think that if you were to ask Him, may be He would make our sweet baby well. Can't you ask Him to walk right into our little room and cure our pet boy? Father won't be angry if he knows what Jesus came for, because he loves the baby so, you know'; and the ready tears chased each other down the little girl's cheeks.

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'Why, Nonie, Jesus will not come in like a man now. He is in heaven, but if we pray to Him He will hear us. Ask Him yourself to cure Jakie, He will hear you,' said Alice.

'But I 'm a Jew, and don't believe in Him, you see; the mother said that I mustn't, and I won't; only I do wish He would help us now'; and the child's voice was wistful in the extreme.

Alice was puzzled. Here was Nonie saying she did not believe in Jesus, yet asking for His help. There was an inconsistency abont this that neither girl could explain.

After standing in silence for about the space of a minute Nonie spoke again: 'Ever since I read in the little book, I have thought the Jews treated Jesus shamefully; but your mother says He 's so good, He won't remember that against them, if they ask His forgiveness. If she hadn't told me that, I 'd think He wouldn't cure a Jew baby; but if He does, Jakie will love Him when he gets big enough, though I suppose father won't let him be anything but a Jew'; and again Nonie's voice sounded wistful and sad. Alice promised to pray for the baby, and uttered a longing wish to see him, 'the dear little boy that he is,' she said.

'I wish you might,' said the other kindly, 'but father 'll never allow that; he says we shall not even speak to you.'

The children parted the best of friends; all the enmity was swept away. Both loved baby Jakie, therefore there was a bond of unity between them.

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Mrs. Bent was soon made acquainted with what Alice had heard; and when she knew of Nonie's request, the teardrops glistened in her eyes, for she saw the seed springing up, despite all the discouragements.

Alice heard no more that day, but on the following morning Nonie came softly up the stairs, and as quietly entered the widow's room, her face all tear-stained, and her voice trembling and sad, as she made known her errand. The father was away, she said, and would be almost the whole day; and the mother would be so glad to have her neighbour come down, for poer Jakie was very, very sick.

'I will go, certainly,' replied Mrs. Bent kindly. But added, as Nonie seated herself near the stove, 'You must not stay here, child, against your father's commands.'

'Only a few minutes, Mrs. Bent. I have something to say to Alice; the mother will not be angry,' was the earnest reply.

The widow left the room, and Nonie promised to follow her as soon as the desired communication was made.

'O Alice!' she cried, as soon as the two were alone, 'Hesed and I are both so sorry for treating you meanly; but you know we had to suffer from your tattling, and that was hard, for you might have kept still: but now we want you to forgive us. We let Bennie kill your cat, and I told Hesed that night to frighten you. He had the broomstick in his hand, and was covered over with a sheet.'

Other explanations followed, and Alice readily forgave

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all. Very few children harbour malice long. 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'

'Have you asked Jesus to help Jakie?' asked the anxious Nonie, after her confessions were finished.

'Yes, indeed, many times,' applied the other enthusiastically.

'Well, we think he is a very little better this morning, and perhaps Jesus is going to make him well; eh, Alice?'

'I think He will,' replied Alice, who added quickly, 'do ask your mother to let me see him a minute, Nonie.'

The latter hastened downstairs, and soon made known her friend's request, which Mrs. Streck immediately consented to; therefore Alice saw her darling Jakie once more. Mrs. Bent found the baby very sick indeed, but she hoped he was not so dangerously ill as the poor anxious mother feared. The latter, made almost wild by anxiety, was unfitted to properly care for the child, therefore was very glad of her neighbour's assistance; and the kind widow spent the hours of Mordecai's absence beside the little sufferer's cradle.

From this time Jakie began to mend, and the poor grateful Jewess thought it was all owing to Mrs. Bent; therefore her enmity, if she had any, was forgotten, and the intimacy would have been renewed, if Mordecai had been willing; but as he was not, Mrs. Streck comforted herself by her oft-repeated assertion, 'Mordecai knows best.'

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Alice and Nonie felt that it was Jesus who had cured the baby; and the latter confessed to her friend, that she would believe in Jesus as her Saviour if her parents were willing. 'For He is so good,' said she, 'to cure even a little Jew baby when the Jews treated Him so shamefully. If Jakie grows big enough to understand, I 'll tell him about it, for I think he ought to love Jesus, who has been so kind to him.'

Gradually Nonie was building on the sure foundation, where safety is found for Jew and Gentile. The leaven was working, and perhaps the whole lump would yet be leavened. So thought Mrs. Bent, who prayed most earnestly as she saw a little light amid the darkness. This good lady, in her zeal, was like Paul, when he said, 'Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.'

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CHAPTER IX.

LIGHTS AND SHADES.

NOT many days after Jakie's recovery, a message came to Mrs. Bent that made both the widow and her daughter sad indeed. Grace Doty was dead. The hidden wings had expanded at length, and all that was left of the gifted and beautiful girl was the form—the clay—which would soon crumble away to dust. She had been cheerful and happy to the last, and rejoiced when her hour of deliverance came. At the earliest opportunity, Alice communicated the sad event to Nonie, who sympathised with her grief, and, as she herself said, 'was real sorry, because the sick lady was so sweet and lovely.'

'She was so fond of Jesus, I should think He would have made her well. It 's strange that He didn't,' said the latter with an air of perplexity.

'Mamma says,' replied Alice, 'that Jesus loved Miss Grace so well that He wanted her close beside Him, where she could enjoy His presence, walk about the city with the golden streets, and see the crystal sea; and He wanted to

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take her away from all the sickness, sorrow, and pain. O Nonie, that must be a lovely place, for there is always something to make one sorry here. I know a great deal about that now; for darling Gipsy died, the ring 's lost, and now to lose dear, sweet Miss Grace is worse than all. Sometimes I almost think, I would like to go to heaven myself.'

'O Alice, don't, because I can't spare you when we 're just getting friends again!' cried Nonie in alarm.

'No, of course I can't, unless God takes me,' said Alice.

Nonie was fully relieved of the fear of losing her friend when she heard this, and concluded Alice would stay as long as possible even if she did 'almost wish to go to heaven.'

The two children parted, the one to go back to the care of her baby brother, and the other to return to her mother, whose 'one little ewe lamb' she was. Mrs. Bent and her little daughter went to Dr. Doty's house, and from thence to the church, where Grace's funeral was held. So beloved was the beautiful girl, that the house could not accommodate the friends and neighbours, who came to look their last on the pure face, and hear the preacher's discourse upon the sad occasion. And poor Alice felt so broken-hearted, that her mother's comforting words were almost lost upon her. It was some comfort, however, to relate afterwards all the sad circumstances to Nonie, who had quite longed to accompany Alice to the funeral.

In the conversation which the two children had upon

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the subject, Nonie said, 'Alice, do you remember Miss Doty telling us about Jesus feeding a great crowd of people on a few loaves of bread?'

Alice nodded a reply, and Nonie continued: 'Well, I didn't half believe it then, but now I think it's really true; because if Jesus could cure Jakie, and take Miss Grace to the beautiful city, I know He could do all the teacher said.'

Thus at each of the children's stolen interviews, the Jew's daughter showed her increasing interest in the great matter that so closely concerns us all. Bennie Shafer and Hesed grew daily more intimate; but this intimacy was no longer annoying to Alice, because the pawnbroker's son would not torment her himself, nor allow the other to do so.

And now we are going to tell you of the finding of the ring, which all came about through this boyish friendship. We shall have to go back some months, for it is bright June weather, and the ring was lost in February. When it dropped from Alice's chubby fingers, it was quickly picked up by Bennie, and as hastily thrust into his pocket, where it lay during the remainder of the walk.

This is why the boy showed such an anxiety about finding it, and was so obliging that he touched Alice's unsuspecting heart.

After the artful boy had obtained the ring, he was sorely puzzled to know what to do with it. He longed to dispose of it to advantage, but how to do this was the question. He would have offered to sell it to his uncle,

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who was a jeweller, and whose nature Bennie seemed to inherit; but he remembered too well how this same uncle served him in regard to a locket he had once found in the street. The jeweller had, after closely examining the locket, concluded to keep it, telling the boy it was entirely useless to him; and as for giving him money for it, that was an unheard of proposition: what did a little boy want of money? His poor old uncle would be dead pretty soon, and would leave him something in his will, perhaps. Bennie had no idea of risking the loss of this new treasure; therefore he kept the secret of its possession closely locked in his own breast, and seriously pondered over the different ways of getting rid of it.

After he knew its worth from Hesed, he was rather startled, and almost wished he had never touched it, but did not dare to return it to Mordecai, nor offer it for sale. After he and the pawnbroker's son became thus intimate, it often occurred to him that he might make a confidant of Hesed, and he daily wondered if this would be safe. At length, concluding to run the risk, he disclosed to his boyish friend the secret of his being in possession of the ring, and ended by asking what plan the other could suggest in regard to its disposal. After Hesed's astonishment had somewhat subsided, the two boys talked over the matter, and at length concluded to offer the article for sale; and to say, in answer to questions concerning it, that they had found it in the gutter. But, as ill luck would have it, soon after the two had a violent quarrel; and Hesed, whose word was no more to be depended on than a broken reed,

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eager to revenge himself, hurried to his father and disclosed the whole. Mordecai was surprised in turn, but lost no time in expressions of astonishment; he was too wise for that, and did what was far better, and more likely to bring back the treasure.

He hurried to Bennie's home, and demanded of the boy the ring. The guilty lad, taken unawares, quickly complied with the demand, and begged the angry pawnbroker not to send him to prison. Bennie's father was a brother Jew, and for this reason Mordecai was merciful, and the boy escaped the punishment he so richly deserved. The pawnbroker was almost in ecstasies over the returned treasure, which was soon in the hands of its rightful owner; Mrs. Bent received the sum back that she had paid towards making the loss good; and all parties, Bennie excepted, rejoiced in the fortunate ending of the matter. God, in His own good time, had cleared the innocent and brought out the guilty, and Mrs. Bent felt that it had been done through believing prayer. 'Ask, and ye *shall* receive,' means all it says; it is not *may*, but *shall* receive: therefore, without doubting, we may claim this sure promise.

At this particular juncture, Mrs. Streck ventured to plead with Mordecai for the widow and Alice; why could not they be on friendly terms with them once more? it would be so pleasant for all, if this might be the case.

'Oh no, no, that will never do, mine Hannah,' said the inexorable Jew; 'we could not be safe; that child is so base.'

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Mrs. Streck ratherly sadly submitted to her husband's decision. She longed for the pleasant company and quiet sympathy of her neighbour, yet comforted herself, as at many times before, by her oft-repeated assertion, 'Mordecai knows best.'

Time passed on, and September smiled upon the earth once more. It was just one year from the date of Mordecai's tenants' first entrance to his dwelling, and now an event occurred, so unlooked for, so frightful, and so sad withal, that those it most closely concerned required great fortitude to meet it.

One bright Sabbath morning Mordecai left his family and started out to enjoy the lovely weather, and to pass away some of the hours of the, to him, idle day. He was joined by two acquaintances who were as idle as himself, and the three walked about the town, having no particular object in view, and no especial point of destination to gain. A handsome building was in course of erection not far from the pawnbroker's shop, and Mordecai proposed that they should go through and examine the different parts of the structure. The others agreed, and the three men were soon strolling around its rooms and conversing on its excellences.

The floors were but loose as yet, and poor Mordecai, by one heedless step, was precipitated from the second storey to the cellar. His horrified companions rushed to his side, hardly knowing what to expect, and scarcely hoping to find him alive. Mordecai was not instantly killed, but his insensible form was quickly borne to his own home, and a

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physician was brought to attend him. The latter pronounced him a doomed man; he might linger a week or two, but the injuries were such as precluded all hope of recovery.

Mrs. Streck was almost beside herself with grief and agitation, when she realised what had so suddenly come upon her; but as soon as Mrs. Bent knew of the accident, she hurried downstairs, and by her quiet help and gentle ways rendered her presence invaluable there. Hesed and Jakie were bidden by her to go out and stay with Alice, so that there might be perfect quiet in the sickroom, for this the doctor had enjoined; while Nonie was kept below stairs, that she might render such assistance as lay in her power.

Mordecai soon regained his senses, and seemed to have no idea of the extent of his injuries. He had never met the widow face to face since the loss of the ring, and seemed surprised to find her stationed near his bed.

'Why is Mrs. Bent here?' he asked of his wife.

'O my good Mordecai, you 're so badly hurt that I sent for her; will you not allow her to stay?'

'Oh, yes, mine Hannah, to please you; but the child must not enter our rooms; it is not safe, you know.'

This settled the matter, and Mrs. Bent spent the weary days of Mordecai's illness in the sickroom, and thus sowed more of the good seed and comforted the poor stricken wife.

The widow tried to bring the truth home to the dying man, but the cares and riches of the world had so filled

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his heart that there seemed but little hope for him. He would not believe he was going to die, though it was plain to others that he was daily sinking. He was very gentle, and unlike the stern, hard Mordecai of the shop, and frequently surprised Mrs. Bent by his amiability.

Often during his illness he said to his wife, 'These strangers may be right, mine Hannah, but I think not; and I have been a wise man and a good Jew, haven't I?'

Mrs. Streck's invariable answer was, 'Oh yes, Mordecai, I never knew so wise a man, nor so good a Jew'; and the simple little woman really thought her husband an example of wisdom and piety.

His business worried the pawnbroker. 'Mine Hannah,' said he, 'I fear for the shop if I lie sick long; you are not wise about such matters, you know. If our Hesed was a few years older, all would be well; for he is a fine boy for business, is Hesed.'

The wife's soothing tone and words allayed these fears for a while, but Mordecai could not easily give up the care of his beloved shop, where so much of his money had been made.

The day came when it was unmistakably plain, to all but the devoted wife, that the sick man's hours were numbered. Still he could not see it, or, at least, would not own to the fact till death was close at hand.

On the morning of that eventful day, he declared himself better. 'I 'm weak, mine Hannah,' said he, 'but have no pain now.'

So steadily and cheerfully did he talk, that Mrs. Streck

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was ready to believe the physician was mistaken, and that her loved Mordecai would recover.

'Where is little Alice?' he asked; 'why does she not come to see me?'

Mrs. Streck did not remind him of his commands regarding the child, but quickly summoned her to the bedside. Long did Alice remember the apparent joy of the sick man at seeing her.

'Climb right up on the bed, little girl,' said he; 'poor old Mordecai wants to talk with you.'

It did not take long to comply with this request, and Alice was soon close to the dying man's side.

'I was one little bit cross to you about the ring, wasn't I, little one?' and Mordecai took one of the chubby hands in his own, which had grown marvellously thin and white. 'Never mind,' he added; 'when I get well, we'll be the best of friends, won't we?' and he tightened his grasp upon the little hand and smiled fondly upon her.

'Have you tried to teach my Nonie to love Jesus, child?' he asked seriously, but not in a tone of displeasure.

'Yes, sir,' was the timid little answer.

'Well, well, perhaps you are right after all. Nonie says Jesus came in here and cured Jakie while I was asleep. It may be so; I don't awaken easily'; and the sick man laughed softly, as if the idea pleased his fancy.

'I have listened,' continued he, 'while your mother talked, little girl, and think she may be right. We'll see, when I get well; but how would it sound to hear people say, "Mordecai Streck has turned Christian"?'

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Alice gazed upon the invalid; she would have scarcely known him. His face was almost ghastly pale, while his eyes were sunken, and had lost the whole of their hungry, greedy expression. She had been told that he could not live, and was astonished to hear him speak of returning health. These thoughts caused the tears to roll down her cheeks as she ventured to ask, 'Why don't you love Jesus now, Mr. Mordecai?'

'O little Alice, that would never do. Mordecai has always been devout, and a Jew could not be lost—I am of Abraham's seed, you know. Still you may be right; we shall see. But call my children quickly, Alice; I feel rather strangely.'

Jakie was quickly placed upon the bed, while Nonie and Hesed came at Alice's call and stood at its side. A change had suddenly passed over the dying man's face, but still he was able to talk. Tenderly he kissed the baby's round face, as he said, 'O my small Jakie my baby, you 'll never remember your father! Ah, my poor little one, who will care for you now?' Then turning to the older children, he continued, 'Ah, my girl and boy, the poor old father is going to leave you! Nonie must comfort the mother, Hesed must take care of the shop, and both must love small Jakie.' Then he addressed his wife. 'O mine Hannah,' he said, 'the way is all so dark! Perhaps these strangers are right; but I have been a good Jew, haven't I?'

'Yes, my dear Mordecai; none better.'

A look of satisfaction passed over his face, but it was

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only momentary; there was nothing to lighten the valley, and soon he began in the same mournful strain again, 'O mine Hannah, it's dark, all dark; I think the strangers are right after all; you never would have cried, "Crucify Him!" But poor Mordecai would let the children love Him, if they want to. Hannah, the strangers are right. Love Jesus, good-bye.' And Mordecai had left wife and children, the hoard of money in the bank, and the shop where the money had been accumulated, and had gone through the dark, dark valley, that none but Jesus can lighten. He is in the hands of God; 'and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

The shop was closed, the house was darkened, and the poor Jew widow was almost inconsolable.

'O my dear, good Mordecai!' she moaned, 'come back to your Hannah and the orphans: we cannot be here without you; you never were cross and surly, like some men; so honest, so good was my dear Mordecai; ah me! ah me! come back! come back!'

The slumberer slept on, in spite of all the moanings and lamentations, and the shop was without a master, and the lonely home without its rightful head.

The day came for the funeral, which was conducted with all Jewish ceremonies; but when the friends returned to the house, Mrs. Streck lighted her fire, extinguished the lights that had burned around the body, and told her neighbour she should observe no more such rites; she was a Jewess, but she wanted to know more of Jesus, the only Saviour of Jew and Gentile. Very soon Nonie was a re-

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joicing Christian; she had only been kept back by her deluded parents, and it was easy for her to give her heart to God, when the way was cleared before her.

Mrs. Streck was longer in doubt and mourning; but the day came when she too could say, 'I have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.' Then her heart rejoiced in her newly found Saviour.

But poor little Hesed stoutly declared he was a Jew, and seemed to imagine it reflected blame upon the lamented father to be of any other sect; therefore he begged his mother to go to the synagogue as of yore. But it is to be hoped, that the child forgot his prejudices and became a follower of Jesus. We have seen that Mrs. Bent persistently did good as she had opportunity, sowed the seed, prayed that it might spring up and grow, exercised faith and patience in the midst of discouragement, and reaped a rich reward. The lesson is for us all. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

We, too, shall find, that whatsoever we sow, that shall we reap; and well for us if we sow to the Spirit, for that will bear fruit unto *eternal life*.

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